

Intimate distances:
Geographies of Gender and Emotion in Shetland

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Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgements	iv
Publications	vi
List of Figures.....	vii
Declaration of Original Scholarship.....	viii
Introduction.....	1
Intimate Distances: theorising geographies of emotion.....	17
2.1 Introduction.....	17
2.2 Distances, Proximities, and Boundaries.....	18
2.3 Geographies of Subjectivity and Gender	27
2.4 Geographies of Emotion	36
2.5 Conclusion	45
Researching Emotions: Feeling your way.....	48
3.1 Introduction.....	48
3.2 Researching Emotional Well-being	50
3.2.1 'Researcher-Researched' Relations: fielding feminist geography.....	50
3.2.2 Whose Representations?: Naming, (self) Defining, Giving Voice.....	54
3.2.3 Resisting representation	58
3.2.4 An informed approach	62
3.3 Contours, practices, and ethics of researching emotions	63
3.3.1 Feelings, Stories, Subjects	63
3.3.2 Managing the interpersonal encounter.....	68
3.3.3 The ethics of emotional research	72
3.4 Research Design.....	76
3.4.1 Developing the research project.....	76
3.4.2 Interviews.....	78
3.4.3 Participant observation and fieldnotes	83
3.4.4 Network maps	89
3.4.5 Demographic questionnaire	92
3.4.6 Consent & Naming	92
3.4.7 Language.....	93
3.5 Data analysis	94
3.6 The ongoing field.....	97
3.7 Conclusion: Why methodology matters.....	98
Shetland's Geographies of Gender.....	101
4.1 Introduction.....	101
4.2 Placing Shetland.....	102
4.2.1 The Significance of Place in Shetland	104
4.2.2 Looking into the distance.....	109
4.3 Shetland's Geographies of Gender	114
4.3.1 Shetland's gender imaginary.....	114
4.3.2 Performing gender in Shetland.	119
4.4 Conclusion	126
Shetland's Geographies of Emotional Well-being	128
5.1 Introduction.....	128
5.2 Social Discourses of Emotional Well-being	129
5.2.1 Happiness?	129
5.2.2 Balance.....	130

5.3 'Making sense' (of self)	133
5.3.1 The 'whole' person	133
5.3.2 Self-management of emotional well-being	135
5.4 Gendering emotional well-being	138
5.5 Placing Emotional Well-being	143
5.5.1 "Where you ought to be"	143
5.5.2 'A special place'	148
5.6 Narrating Emotional Well-being	151
5.6.1 Placing the Self	152
5.6.2 Holding the self in place: Enclosure	157
5.7 The "Passage through the therapeutic"	162
5.7.1 "Express your self": Disclosure	163
5.7.2 The (un)bounded self	165
5.8 Conclusion	168
Shetland's Geographies of Intimacy	171
6.1 Introduction	171
6.2 Intimacy as a measure of well-being	172
6.3 The story of Jo: the spaces of intimacy	179
6.4 Facing up to Intimacy: strange(r) proximity	186
6.5 The practice of intimate distance	192
6.6 The politics of intimacy and difference	196
6.7 Conclusion	198
Conclusion	200
7.1 A Review of the Thesis	201
7.2 Theoretical Reflections	208
7.3 Analytical Reflections	214
7.4 Agenda for Future Research	219
Glossary	223
Appendices	226
Appendix A: Letter to Potential Interviewees	226
Appendix B: Research Flyer	227
Appendix C: Potential Interview Questions (2002)	229
Appendix D: Interview Schedule	233
Appendix E: Interview Information Sheet	235
Appendix F: Demographic Questionnaire	236
Appendix G: Affective Maps including User Notes	238
Appendix H: Interview and Fieldnote codes	241
Appendix I: Profiles	245
Appendix J: Table of Participant Data	251
Works Cited	252

Abstract

This thesis examines the emotional well-being of women in the Shetland Isles, Scotland. The research seeks to articulate the gendered spatialities of emotion by intertwining post-structural feminist theories of gender; psychoanalytic insights into issues of subjectivity, identity, and relationality; and geographical understandings of social places and spaces to appraise the emotional narratives of a selection of Shetland women. These narratives were gathered during two fieldwork periods in Shetland and are augmented by ethnographic fieldnotes. While some research has explored how women experience rural spaces, and more recently, geographies of mental health have been a subject for study, the particular dimensions of women's emotional health experiences in isolated geographies has yet to be fully understood or documented. This thesis explores this gap, offering an enhanced understanding of the spatial and gendered practices of emotional well-being in a non-urban context.

Chapter One introduces the rationale for focusing on how women who live remotely define, develop and use strategies for maintaining emotional well-being. Women were interviewed for two connected reasons: (1) the feminist political value in attending to the experiences of women and a too easy slide into equality rhetoric otherwise, and (2) women's visceral, complex and non-innocent relationship with emotions as the expected bearers of emotional burdens (in theory, if not in practice). Their expressions of, attitudes towards, and techniques for managing emotions can

be read for insights into processes of gender and subjectivity. The remote island setting offered an alternative to predominantly urban-centred readings of modern culture.

Chapter Two reviews relevant bodies of literature to consider social and spatial distances and proximities; post-structural analyses of gender and subjectivity; and emergent approaches to the spatialities of emotion. Emotions are understood as 'taking place' through complex interactions between inner emotional worlds, cultural norms, and social and geographical contexts. Chapter Three details the research design of the thesis and reflects on dilemmas of feminist fieldwork such as issues of power and naming. This methodological chapter also considers some of the complications of feeling your way through emotions research, drawing from fieldnote excerpts. The remaining three substantive chapters offer close readings of the interview narratives interwoven with theoretical concerns.

Chapter Four examines the intersection of place, gender, and emotion in Shetland. The placing and gendering of the particular Shetland context is discussed via interview accounts and participant observation at an annual festival. Chapter Five examines accounts of emotional well-being, including how people narrate the emotional self in a process of placing the self, and also touching on therapeutic tactics for eliciting self narratives. Chapter Six identifies and deconstructs spatial discourses of intimacy and demonstrates how such discourses are bound up in senses of emotional well-being.

The thesis concludes by suggesting that this detailed examination of women's emotional well-being in Shetland productively opens up the spatialities of emotion. This, in turn, extends understandings of the interplay between gender relations, gender identities, and the spatial patterning of non-urban life in western societies.

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List of Figures

Figure 1: Shetland is categorised as 'Remote Rural' 11

Figure 2: Front page news in Shetland 12

Figure 3: Map of Shetland 103

Figure 4: The dramatic coastline 104

Figure 5: Waiting for the ferry 111

Figure 6: On the edge in Shetland? 112

Figure 7: The Kiss 173

Declaration of Original Scholarship

I declare that this thesis represents my own work and that where the work of others has been used it has been duly acknowledged.

Deborah Thien

April 25, 2005

April 25, 2005

Introduction

“Any given moment—no matter how casual, how ordinary—is poised, full of gaping life”

(Michaels 1996: 19)

The goal of my research is to understand the ways in which women who live in Shetland define, develop, and use strategies for maintaining emotional well-being. Existing research has explored how women experience rural spaces (e.g. Little and Austin 1996; Hughes 1997), other work has examined the spaces of women's organisations (i.e. Greene 2000), and more recently, geographies of mental health have been a subject for study (Milligan 1999; Parr 1999a; Parr 2001b; Parr 2002; Wilson 2003). The particular dimensions of women's emotional well-being in isolated geographies, however, have yet to be fully documented. This research

addresses that gap by offering a feminist geographic analysis of accounts of women's emotional well-being in Shetland. In so doing, the research extends the breadth of feminist geographies, contributes to the developing field of emotional geographies, and adds a new perspective to the mostly urban-centred work of feminist geography and feminist theory.

In my initial research proposal, I planned to research the role of community women's organisations for women living remotely. This built on my established research interest in the organised spaces and experiences of women's mental health from a non-clinical perspective (Thien 2000).¹ I wanted to examine how such services are differently accessed in remote areas. I proposed considering how potential shifts in practice in the delivery of women's services in rural and remote areas of Scotland might encourage the development of improved and appropriate social and health policies. The resulting articulation of rural women's experiences, I suggested, would enable community women's organizations to enhance existing services and thus to directly and positively affect the health of local women.

As a consequence of my preliminary research and planning, my initial research proposal to investigate women's community organisations evolved into a research project that sought to understand something that was less tangible and seemingly, literally, less organised: women's emotional well-being. My perspective shifted from considering the point of encounter between a women's community service and the

¹ For my M.A. research, I carried out a fieldwork study of a women-only drop-in centre in an urban location which offered women support in recovery from mental health issues.

women taking up that service, to individual women's subjective experiences of emotional well-being in a remote location.

My interest in exploring emotional well-being stems from a lifelong fascination with emotion – why we feel what we do, when and how to convey that to another, how to understand the minds and hearts of friends and intimates, to ponder not just our grand passions but the more subtle affective shadings too. Writing about emotions has often been left to the lyrical skills of poetry and prose writers. Literary examples abound which demonstrate how emotion, gender and place move and shift in complex patterns. Margaret Atwood's (1989) heroine in *Surfacing* explores and explodes the relationship between wilderness, madness, and femininity; Marcel Proust's (Proust 1984) hero Swann identifies his unrequited love for Odette with the mysteries of Paris; and Barbara Kingsolver's (2001) *Prodigal Summer* weaves the natural environment into the emotional lives of her characters and their relationships with one another. Literary engagements with emotion capture the reader with deftly drawn characters and a finely rendered story and I occasionally turn to such sources throughout this thesis. Yet, exploring the academic literature and research on emotion is no less fascinating and it is certainly no less infinite in its potential for intriguing subjects or stories. As the academies of the twenty-first century take shape, an 'affective turn' is rippling through the forefront of critical thought.

Social, cultural, and feminist geographers (Bondi 1999b; Wood 2002; Airey 2003; Bondi and Fewell 2003b; Callard 2003; Thrift 2004), cultural and gender theorists (Chodorow 1999; Ahmed 2002; Harding and Pribram 2002; Sedgwick 2003),

philosophers (Nussbaum 2001), sociologists (Jamieson 1998; Hochschild 2000; Williams 2001; Hochschild 2003); those in the psychological disciplines (Matthis 2000; Blackman 2004) and neuroscientists (Damasio 2000) are all turning their attention to emotion. Sociologist, Simon Williams offers several reasons for the current increase in a scholarly interest in the emotions: The influence of critical and feminist debates about rationality and critiques of master narratives; a greater interest in the body as discursive (Foucault), as phenomenological (Merleau-Ponty) or hyperreal (Baudrillard); an increasing consumer culture and the resulting commercialization of emotions; a therapeutic culture within which we are advised to manage our emotions (emotional health); and a set of political debates about emotions, democracy and life (emotion as communication with or commitment to others) (Williams 2001). Although Williams' summary does not address explicitly the gender politics of emotions or how the spaces and the subjectivities of our interactions and communications have a role to play in the performing, receiving and enacting of those politics, these various approaches herald the beginnings of a rich and diverse field.

This affective turn in social and critical thought challenges the commonplace notion that emotion is out of place within academic research and practice. As researchers and social scientists², we are encouraged to keep an emotional distance from our research 'subjects' to avoid clouding our judgment and to eliminate the difficulties of 'getting involved'. We are encouraged to formulate our theories with an objective eye and to avoid the subjective 'I'. The roots of this tendency can be traced to an

² Consider how this very designation 'social scientist' insists upon a distanced investigation of the social.

Enlightenment view of science based on the Cartesian separation of mind and body, a paradigm within which objectivity has been highly prized. While this legacy is apparent across the social sciences, within geography it has held particular sway (G. Rose 1993). Emotional geographies encompasses a growing interdisciplinary scholarship that combines the insights of geography, gender studies, cultural studies, sociology, anthropology and other disciplines to understand how the world is mediated by feeling. Collectively, this still nascent work carries forward poststructuralist challenges to a strictly 'rational' science by addressing the spatialities of emotions. Geographers Kay Anderson and Sue Smith make a case for furthering research on the emotions, suggesting we are in need of work that acknowledges the emotions "as ways of knowing, being and doing in the broadest sense; and using this to take geographical knowledges...beyond their more usual visual, textual and linguistic domains" (2001: 8). They call for a "sharper 'geographical sensibility'" so that we might better understand what is currently half-hidden, if not invisible in some research: emotion as a fundamental aspect of human experience (Anderson and Smith 2001: 9).

We are stirred, disturbed, and agitated by the movement of emotions.³ In the western world, certain historical and cultural versions of emotion have come to have primacy in academic and social terms. Most notably, within the ethos of the Enlightenment

³ An excavation of definitions of emotion reveals the etymologically powerful intensity and energetics of this otherwise abstract concept: A moving out, migration, transference from one place to another; a moving, stirring, agitation, perturbation (in physical sense); a political or social agitation; a tumult, popular disturbance; any agitation or disturbance of mind, feeling, passion; any vehement or excited mental state; a mental 'feeling' or 'affection' (e.g. of pleasure or pain, desire or aversion, surprise, hope or fear, etc.), as distinguished from cognitive or volitional states of consciousness (Oxford English Dictionary Online, 2004).

project (itself influenced by the Platonic tradition⁴) which underpins much of the intellectual work of my academic inheritance, emotion is the messy 'other' half of ideal rationality. As such, emotions are consigned to a list of 'inferior' states such as being female (to its ideal counterpart, male), embodied (as opposed to the pristine world of mind), and subjective (a chaotic other to the ordered realm of objectivity). Emotions in this Enlightenment paradigm are understood precisely as that which is uncontained, without rational boundaries, or as overstepping or overflowing the bounds of rational conduct. Consider, for example, the chaos implied in each of the following expressions: 'boundless grief', 'wild with anger', 'uncontrollable fury', and 'overjoyed'. A scientific inquiry that values rationality, intellectual rigour, and (self)discipline will seek to control that which oversteps the bounds. Sociologist Simon Williams⁵ notes:

the dominant view, dating as far back as Plato and receiving a further Cartesian twist in the seventeenth century, seems to have been that emotions need to be 'tamed', 'harnessed' or 'driven out' by the steady hand of (male) reason (Williams 2001: 2).

In our contemporary academies, emotions are both feminized and privatized and this "private/feminine [operates] as a category for containing emotions" (Harding and Pribram 2002: 419). Safely contained, emotions can be set aside while the 'real' academic labour goes on. Despite such Procrustean tendencies, it is not accurate to

⁴ See Songe-Møller (2002) for a discussion of 'masculine democracy' within the Athenian city state and women's corresponding construction as outsiders. She addresses the gendered dichotomy of unity and plurality within which the masculine principle was unified and the feminine, disharmonious.

⁵ Williams looks to sociological 'masters' such as Durkheim and Weber and Simmel to seek out the history of emotions research.

say that all academic disciplines have attempted to cut off or cut out emotion. For example, despite a predominantly patronizing attitude towards emotions as the feminized and embodied other to male rationality, Williams warns that it is a disservice to both classical and contemporary sociology to say that this discipline has ignored emotions and the body – rather he argues that such issues have a 'secret history' within sociology, "it just needs re-reading in a new more emotionally informed, corporeal light" (Williams 2001: 3). He attributes a significant proportion of the 'exposure' of such 'secrets' to feminist critiques which have steadily identified and deconstructed the binary opposition of emotion to reason. A consequence of such critiques is that "the disembodied illusions and (masculine) ideals of a rationally controllable world, 'untainted' by emotions, are being exposed for what they are" (Williams 2001: 8).

In recent scholarship in sociology, psychology, cultural studies, and geography, emotion has been considered within a broadly poststructural frame. In this context, emotion is not a static thing-in-itself, but a relationally⁶ constituted and power-laden process. For example, emotions have been defined as "complex manifestations of corporeal and psychological aspects of human beings which are simultaneously felt and performed as relations between self and world" (Laurier and Parr 2000: 98). Feminist psychoanalyst, Chodorow argues: "Emotions are states, complexes of physically palpable, feeling-imbued, unconscious fantasy meanings, as well as practices" (1999: 155). In each of these understandings, emotions are a blurring of

⁶ Of course, a binary system of meaning making is also relational. One term depends precisely on its relationship to the other. What I mean here is 'relational' in the context of a psychoanalytically inspired theory of human subjectivity. In this sense, 'relational' implies that that which is in relation is not fixed or stable, and as such the relation is a contingent process instead of an assumed, factual reality.

mental and visceral experience, allowing us to trouble⁷ the everyday metaphysics of mind versus body, emotion versus reason, which owe so much to Descartes.

This reframing of emotion seems almost a coming of age for (twenty-first century, western) feminist scholarship. Feminists have needed, at length, to address first sex (and sexual politics) and then gender, in order to come to grips with and make changes within the complexities of a patriarchal world. An over-determined link between women and emotion, in combination with the often dismissive conception of emotion as the weak feminine opposite to a masculine intellect, has rendered emotion too risky a topic for serious feminist study. But, the need to assiduously avoid emotion in order to prevent charges of essentialism seems to be disappearing. In its wake is a turning tide of feminist inquiry into emotional landscapes.

My choice to focus on women and their experiences and conceptions of emotional well-being has both practical and ideological justification. Feminist geographies are by no means limited to research on or by women as the surge of geographies of masculinities exemplifies (Berg and Longhurst 2003), and so my choice to focus on women should not be read as the self-evident choice of a feminist geographer, nor as a consequence of an essential connection between women and emotion. In practical terms, I have a theoretical and empirical background of studying women's lives and the social aspects of women's health. This gave me a strong grounding from which to conduct this research with women. Additionally, the most cursory look at western

⁷ Many have noted the impossibility of rejecting dualisms (e.g. Irigaray 2000) given their entrenched position in our ways of thinking and living. Some have argued further that dualistic frameworks can assist people who are experiencing identity difficulties while also noting that this does not mean we should refrain from questioning and problematizing such binary worldviews (see Davidson 2002).

popular culture demonstrates that associations between femininity and emotion abound. Even in the futuristic world of *Oryx and Crake* (Atwood 2004), it is the female Crakers who are attributed with the ability to sense and ease anxiety. I am emphatically not suggesting these cultural references support an essential connection between women and emotion. Rather, I propose that a powerful subject position exists: women as the expected bearers of emotional burdens. As a consequence, women, in all their diversity, have a visceral, complex, and non-innocent relationship with emotions and thus have much to say about this subject.

Ideologically, I believe there is feminist political value in attending to the experiences of women and a too easy slide into equality rhetoric if not. Again, this emphasis is not to place women in essentialised opposition to men, nor to bring women into a false equivalence with men. Instead, taking my cue from feminist philosophers like Irigaray (1991; 1993; 1993 [1985]; 1996; 2000) and the excellent examples of post-structural feminist social research, such as that of J.K. Gibson-Graham (1994), I work towards an understanding of gender as relational, a concept that relies on the recognition of alterity. To consider women as a homogenous group would be to miss the significance of alterity in a reworking of gender. Instead, an empirical consequence of this philosophical point is to attend to the specificity of individual accounts in relationship to particular subject positions, for example the subject positions that result from “one of the most powerful and pervasive discourses in social life (that of the binary hierarchy of gender)” (Gibson-Graham 1994: 219). Asking women about their sense of, attitudes towards, and techniques for managing emotions produces rich material which can be read for insights into processes of

gender and subjectivity in this contemporary western context. In this way, new subject positions emerge and understandings of gender multiply.

My interest in Shetland as the site of my research (as opposed to other rural parts of Scotland, e.g. the Borders region) was influenced in part by a period of research and study in northern Canada which attuned my senses to the realities and gender politics of northern rural and remote communities. In particular, the few published studies of women's experiences of northern rural and remote communities in British Columbia (e.g. L. Anderson et al. 2000) highlighted for me the ways in which gender, place, and culture combine to affect women's mental health, broadly speaking. In addition, Shetland interested me because as an islander myself,⁸ I have an affinity for the intricacies of island life. Shetland held additional interest in my original proposal because Shetland has a Women's Aid – a longstanding women's organisation with a feminist history – which, for example, Orkney does not.

As a community designated as 'remote-rural', Shetland sits in the far corner of the Scottish map (Figure 1). The distance between Shetland and the Scottish mainland is increased by the sense of cultural separation. While Shetland is politically connected to Scotland, there is a feeling and an active maintaining of this separation from the south. Shetland is imaginatively connected to a Norse identity but is bound by no

⁸ I grew up in a small town in the central region of Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada. The cosmopolitan city of Vancouver is only a 2.5 hour journey away, but requires both road and ferry transport and as such travel is restricted by ferry sailing times (during my residence, the last of eight daily sailings from either side was 9pm and the first 7am). The provincial seat of government, Victoria, was a three hour road trip to the south. The highway system has been greatly improved since my childhood and the trip from my hometown to Victoria is now closer to two hours. While these distances may give the impression of a remote locale, in fact, within the Canadian context, it is not experienced as such. Later periods of residence and research in Northern B.C. taught me much more about living remotely.

formal or state tie. These ambiguous connections and disconnections result in Shetland continually redefining and reasserting its collective boundaries. Cohen has argued that such boundary-making is essential for 'peripheral communities' and suggests the key is in "the maintenance and continual reconstruction of a sense of self" (1987: 18).

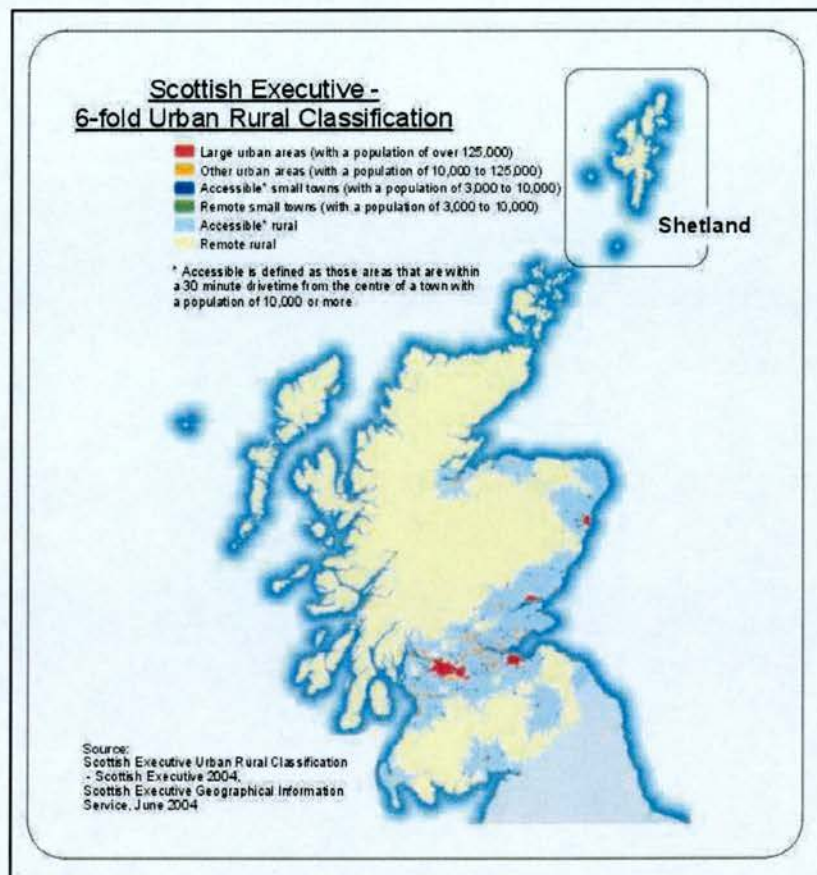


Figure 1: Shetland is categorised as 'Remote Rural'.⁹

⁹ Map adapted to highlight Shetland's location. Original available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/rural/seurc.pdf>.

While Shetland may appear to be far from the concerns of the world, and is at times characterized as having a postcard simplicity -- this does not preclude the social or cultural complexity to be found in Shetland. The front page of *The Shetland Times*, February 21, 2003, displays a headline article about a 'fishing package revolt' alongside a full length photo of Shetlanders joining in protest against the war in Iraq (Figure 2). The photo, captioned: "No in wir*¹⁰ names!" renders the British anti-war cry 'Not in our names!' into Shetland dialect, making the march distinctly Shetland. The juxtaposition of these two stories nicely captures two equally strong commitments in Shetland: the protection and celebration of Shetland's unique identity in the face of outside interests, and the claim to a cosmopolitan participation in a global community. Both demonstrate how Shetland can 'hold its own' in the wider world despite its seemingly remote location.



Figure 2: Front page news in Shetland

¹⁰ English equivalents for Shetland dialect words that appear in this and subsequent chapters are provided in a glossary at the end of the thesis.

Shetland's spatial dimensions necessarily preoccupy both residents and visitors, affecting, as they do, the most everyday realities. Distance – whether distance from or distance to the isles – is an impossible subject to avoid in Shetland. The continual movement of inter-island ferries within Shetland, anxieties over the frequent cancellations of air and ferry services off Shetland, the busy Lerwick harbour which receives cruise ships in the summer, and various restrictions on local access to healthcare, entertainment, and employment or educational opportunities are just some of the everyday ways in which Shetland's relationship with distance is an inseparable part of Shetland life. In this feminist geographic project, I am interested in how such a study can make explicit the interplay of psychic, social, and spatial distances and proximities.

On my first try at getting to Shetland, I ended up in Inverness. My route traced a rough circle in the sky from Edinburgh to within feet of Shetland's Sumburgh runway (on three separate landing attempts), to Orkney's Kirkwall airstrip, back to Edinburgh and finally, courtesy of British Airways, via a chauffeur-driven Jaguar to Inverness. I had been warned. Earlier that day when I arrived at Edinburgh airport, frazzled, late and full of equal parts excitement and anxiety, the check-in clerk calmly and pleasantly tagged my luggage then handed me a notice: 'Please be advised we may not be able to land at Shetland due to adverse weather conditions'. It was the middle of June. The man at the gate told me not to worry: nine out of ten times, the flight *does* land. When I did finally make my flight to Shetland from Inverness, I had an illuminating conversation with an island resident. I remarked to

her that due to the distance I had already travelled, I felt I must be off to a different country. She said: "it is, emotionally".

Outline of Research

This introductory chapter has introduced the rationale for focusing women's emotional well-being Shetland. I suggest women's expressions of, attitudes towards, and techniques for managing emotions can be read for insights into processes of gender and subjectivity. The choice of a remote island setting reflects the intersections of my research and personal experiences, and offers an alternative to predominantly urban-centred readings of modern culture.

Chapter Two reviews relevant bodies of literature on emotion, gender and place. Emotions are understood as 'taking place' through complex interactions between inner emotional worlds, cultural norms, and social and geographical contexts. Relevant feminist, psychoanalytic, geographical, sociological and cultural theory work is reviewed. Theoretically, I extend a feminist geographic and poststructuralist framework and draw on psychoanalytic theories to provide a means to explore the notion of an emotional self, which I argue is an integral part of a gendered politics of emotional well-being. As a body of ideas and experience, psychoanalysis offers a way to question the rational subject of so much contemporary scholarship and also provides a means to consider the relationships between self and other (whether other is potentially human, gendered, environmental, or inanimate). Theoretically, a poststructural feminism offers "one important way of thinking through a more fluid,

emotionally founded notion of bodies, identities and desires” (Williams 2001: 85). As emotions are so clearly bound in a politics of gender, and gender is mutually constitutive of place, a feminist geographic approach ensures a politicized accounting of the assumptions of both emotions and gender.

Chapter Three details the research design of the thesis and reflects on dilemmas of feminist fieldwork such as issues of power and naming. This methodological chapter also considers some of the complications of feeling your way through emotions research, drawing from fieldnote excerpts. In this research, I interviewed twenty-two women and one man in Shetland about emotional well-being and held informal conversations with innumerable others. The rationale for these interviews and for the fieldwork periods within which they were carried out are detailed in this chapter.

The remaining three substantive chapters focus respectively on the operation of gender and place, geographies of emotional well-being, and the spatialities of intimacy. Chapter Four examines the intersection of place, gender, and emotion in Shetland. The placing and gendering of the particular Shetland context is discussed via interview accounts and participant observation at an annual festival. Chapter Five analyses understandings of well-being as expressed in interviews, including how people narrate the emotional self in a process of placing the self, and also touching on therapeutic tactics for eliciting self narratives. Chapter Six identifies and deconstructs spatial discourses of intimacy and demonstrates how such discourses are bound up in senses of emotional well-being. Chapter Seven concludes this thesis by suggesting that this detailed examination of women's emotional well-being in

Shetland productively opens up the spatialities of emotion. This, in turn, extends understandings of the interplay between gender relations, gender identities, and the spatial patterning of non-urban life in western societies. Building on these insights, I propose plans for future research to further extend this work.

Intimate Distances: theorising geographies of emotion

2.1 Introduction

My goal in this chapter is to determine an appropriate theoretical model for a feminist study of women's emotional well-being in Shetland. This substantive focus generates some specific theoretical demands in terms of theorising place, gender and emotional well-being. Accordingly, the first section of this review attends to place. I consider social and spatial distances and proximities by closely examining constructs of rurality, theories of encounter in proximal spaces, and the nature and enactment of psycho-social boundaries. My interest is in determining how such spatial arrangements might affect senses of emotional well-being. The second section of this chapter reviews post-structural analyses of gender and subjectivity, seeking insights

into the spatial patterning and relational nature of gender and identities. My attention here is on how geographies of gender and subjectivity illuminate women's experiences of emotional well-being. In the third section, I review a selection of emergent approaches to the spatialities of emotion. My focus is on determining the most useful insights and applying these to the development of my theoretical framework. Ultimately, I argue that a feminist post-structural stance on relationality allows for an in-depth consideration of how various distances and proximities affect and effect emotional well-being, acknowledges that gender matters, and enables attention to the emotional geographies of women's lives. From this situated perspective, I can most usefully theorise women's emotional well-being in Shetland.

2.2 Distances, Proximities, and Boundaries

"Rural", and related terms such as "remote", and "northern", are all spatially determined adjectives that suggest *distance from*. Shetland is classified as 'remote rural'¹¹ because of its distance from a town with a population of more than 10,000. This perception of rurality as being distanced from the metropolis, a place of "bucolic tranquillity and communion with nature" (Bell 1997: 94), is the most commonly recognized and possibly the most widely contested idea of rurality (Little and Austin 1996; Watkins 1997; Woodward 1998).

¹¹ In the Scottish Executive's Urban Rural Classification (see Figure 1 in Chapter One).

In addition to this quantifiable measure of distance, rural spaces are also distanced through constructs of gender. Far from the urban masculinity associated with business, politics, and power, rural spaces are conceived of as highly feminised and so lauded for being 'natural', 'peaceful', and 'caring' places. This rendering of the rural idyll subjects the rural in a particularly gendered fashion: the countryside is represented as an essentialised female space, in opposition to a patriarchal, "'man-made' city" (Valentine 1997: 109)¹². Some activists and scholars celebrate this separation as evidence of women's special relationship with the earth, suggesting, for example, that "rural women's connections to the natural world can inform feminist theory" (Sachs 1996: 6). But, several feminist scholars have explored and debunked such feminizing of rural spaces (i.e. Seager 1993; Valentine 1997). Gill Valentine (1997), in her study of a rural lesbian separatist space, illustrates how attempts to inhabit a feminised rural space make visible the unequal privileges and power hierarchies in such a rendering of the rural idyll.

The distances of rurality paradoxically result in assumptions of proximity. Perceptions of the rural idyll from inside and out as a place of happy communal 'natural' living, suggest that the distance from the turmoil of urban settings makes space for a comfortable intimacy: a place without strangers. This perception of rural communities as proximal in the extreme remains a familiar version of rurality. The rural locale is popularly viewed as the place, par excellence, of warmth and close

¹² This is in keeping with a well-rehearsed binary logic, wherein women and nature form the inferior other half to man and culture, respectively. Doreen Massey identifies a similar denigration of 'local' as the feminised other of 'global' (Massey 1994). As several scholars note (e.g. Lister 1997), binary oppositions have shaped conceptual understandings within Western thought since the time of Aristotle and Plato and have only recently been deconstructed through the interventions of poststructuralist and feminist thought.

association. Reflecting on rural Highland communities, Hester Parr comments: “people are often physically distant from neighbours...but more socially connected than in urban localities” (2002). At the base of these assumptions is a simple calculus: the social proximity of life in a geographically distant (from “others”) place is correlated with emotional closeness amongst the inhabitants (“us”). Yet, Milligan argues that this very experience of proximity may contribute to a lack of well-being:

The perception of stigma and heightened visibility in rural locales, social isolation, the conflict between housing opportunities and the concept of home, along with the importance of employment opportunities, can all be seen to combine to create geographies of [mental ill-health] (Milligan 1999: 230).

Indeed, in the context of mental ill-health, the respondents in Milligan’s Scottish study report few socially supportive environments in their rural environs (Milligan 1999). Drop-in centres, transient environments by nature, are perceived as their best option. Such is the strength of the belief in the peace and bonhomie of rural living that well-being and other issues of mental health in rural communities have had little attention. Instead, assumptions of the ‘good life’ continue to hold sway, especially in a British context (but see Milligan 1999; Parr 1999).

Poststructuralist efforts to demythologize the rural idyll explicitly posit rurality as a discursive construction, moving “away from the idea of the rural as a bounded, located space where rurality suggests a real object, or a landscape quality or a

particular configuration of social and economic practices”, and towards a sense of “people living both within and outwith rural localities constitut[ing] rurality in particular ways through the use of discourses and language” (Woodward 1998: 278). This discursive revisioning of the rural engenders the possibility of multiple rural constructions and thus acknowledges how the attributes of the rural will range depending on the group or individual perspectives (Little and Austin 1996: 101).¹³ Importantly, this reworking of rurality also reviews the relationship of the rural to social and spatial distance.

If, rather than a simple question of *distance from* or *closeness to*, the rural operates as a collectively constructed enterprise, fixed spatial boundaries are acknowledged but exceeded. Whatmore argues: “the significance of rurality as a relational and discursive process should be recognized to extend beyond the confines of any discernible rural space” (Whatmore 1993: 607). Despite this theorising, and research into “other” countrysides (see Cloke and Little 1997), the deconstruction of rurality remains more theory than practice. Further empirical research into experiences of rural spaces is needed to explore how the distances and proximities of such spaces affect and effect emotional well-being.

Erving Goffman, a proponent of symbolic interactionism¹⁴, famously sketched detailed observations of face-to-face encounters in the Shetland Isles in an effort to

¹³ Of course, this understanding applies to the researchers as well to the researched. As Cloke et al. acknowledge, “[I]f the people living in the villages we studied read the rural in myriad different ways, why should it be any surprise that we, as apparently detached researchers, should read the rural any differently?” (1994: v-vi).

¹⁴ Arising out of the Chicago School’s collective efforts to consider spatial and social distance, symbolic interactionism posits that the social world is a product of social interaction between pragmatic actors who interpret the actions of others and behave accordingly.

understand how people perform socially in the various proximal regions of everyday life. Shetland's busiest thoroughfare, and the most likely place for close encounters, is the narrow winding Commercial Street in Lerwick. As its name implies, the street is lined with banks, the post office, cafes, and other amenities. With buildings on both sides, the street has a sheltered feel and is mostly traversed by pedestrians creating a highly proximal space for social encounters. Such spaces of encounter are critical in Goffman's theory.

Goffman separates daily life into "front", "back stage", and "outside" regions. As with a stage set, the front is where performances take place. This is not determined by literal space necessarily (though in Goffman's case study of a hotel dining room, the dining room is straightforwardly conceived of as the front stage to the kitchen's back stage). The front is also determined by the appearance and manner of the occupants within the different spaces, including "relatively fixed" characteristics or "relatively mobile or transitory" aspects such as facial expressions (Goffman 1969: 21). Goffman's dramaturgical approach considers how we are variously performers, audience members, or outsiders in an ongoing drama devoted to projecting and receiving particular information. In his understanding of how these dramas are co-dependent on the spaces of encounters, Goffman foreshadows later theories of the mutual constitution of subjects and spaces (i.e. Massey 1997).

Goffman's work suggests that we use divisions of space to manage emotion. The use of different spaces to manage the distance between performer and audience, Goffman proposes, is a means to limiting and regulating what is available for perception by

others. This allows both performers and audience to control their use of information in particular (and particularly proximal) spaces (1969: 58). Performers and audience alike will practice strategies for managing discrepancies, such as making use of the back region for mis-takes: "it is here that illusions and impressions are openly constructed....Here the performer can relax; he can drop his front, forgo speaking his lines, and step out of character (Goffman 1969: 97-8). These strategies enable people to avoid disruption and so to eliminate uncomfortable emotions such as embarrassment or shame, or the discrediting of an individual's self-conceptions (Goffman 1969: 219). Goffman argues that the potential for intentional and unintentional disruptions (or misrepresentations) in this process of expressing the social self highlights processes of both recognition and misrecognition: "a kind of information game: a potentially infinite cycle of concealment, discovery, false revelation, and rediscovery" (Goffman 1969: 6). Emotions, including their expression and deliberate repression, are a central consideration in his analysis of encounters; he is especially interested in feelings of embarrassment, shame, pride, and a sense of belonging.

Goffman's work is rich in insights into human encounters in rural spaces and in Shetland, in particular. Goffman's analysis does, however, have some limitations. Goffman's division of spaces into discrete units (front stage, back stage) exaggerates an actor's conscious ability to bound particular spaces. Furthermore, Goffman's structural behavioural approach is based on the idea that information can be consciously withheld, controlled, or precisely communicated by individual social actors. So, he similarly assumes people are themselves bounded – that they are free

from any 'leakages' that may allow uncontrolled information to seep through. As Arlie Hochschild argues: "In Goffman's theory... [t]he self may actively choose to *display* feelings in order to give outward impressions to others" (Hochschild 2003: 228).

Goffman's sociological paradigm of socially proximate encounters needs to be extended in two ways: first in acknowledging more explicitly the relationships people hold with others, including the self as other, in the psychic life of encounters; and secondly, in considering the relationships people have *with* the places of their encounters as opposed to detailing their performances *within* certain places. Insights can be found within some geographical research. David Sibley's (Sibley 1995; 1998) work on exclusion, otherness, and abjection analyzes the formation of boundaries between self and other, considering the problem of "matter out of place" (Douglas 1966). Joyce Davidson's phenomenological work on agoraphobic spaces (Davidson 2000; 2002) considers the emotional well-being of sufferers of agoraphobia, analysing their experiences of the permeability of boundaries between selves and space.

Boundaries (and related versions such as borders) have a rich history in social and cultural theory and much of this work concerns *what* happens, *how* it happens, and *why* it happens that boundaries are put in place (see Sibley 1995). I am interested in pressing this work for insights into how boundaries *feel*: the psycho-social aspects of boundaries within social, cultural, and emotional geographies. Sibley's work (1995; 1998) on exclusion and otherness details the powerful politics which function to

establish distances or proximities through psycho-social boundaries. Sibley argues that exclusion (the separation of the world into 'us and them') is the dominant factor in the creation of social and spatial boundaries. Exclusion involves 'purifying' space, and this process requires boundaries and boundary maintenance (Sibley 1995: 109). Thus, the respondents in a study of a Scottish housing scheme employ "moral boundaries" to make themselves distinct from their "trouble-making" neighbours (Airey 2003). Geographer Laura Airey refers to the use of these boundaries as "distancing strategies" and suggests that such strategies "may be understood as one way of attempting to render neighbourhood incivilities 'not personally stressful'" (Airey 2003: 135).

Fear, suspicion, and a desire to expel the abject work to fragment social space into legitimate and illegitimate areas and people into pure or defiled bodies. Sibley (1998), following Kristeva, argues that in distancing from others, we are engaged in the continual and doomed project of escaping the abject. The abject is neither "fixed, immutable or universal" (Sibley 1998: 120) but is nonetheless that which most profoundly challenges our most personal sense of boundaries. Sibley stresses that the project of distancing through establishing boundaries is an inevitable aspect of socio-spatial relations. What we must recognize, Sibley insists, is that while exclusionary practices create boundaries, these boundaries are fluid and dynamic. Thus, they will carry different meanings and can produce positive and negative effects, depending on the spaces individuals inhabit and on how they inhabit them (e.g. in terms of power wielded or not). For example, Sibley notes that feminist scholars have been highly

productive in spaces of exclusion, finding creativity and leverage from excluded positions.

Exemplifying Sibley's claim that boundaries are not simply exclusionary, but can also be sites of creativity or power, Davidson's research details agoraphobic women's experiences of employing boundaries (Davidson 2000; Davidson 2002). For Davidson's interviewees, the body is not always experienced as a sufficient boundary to hold in a sense of self and so requires additional fortifications. Her findings suggest that agoraphobics experience themselves as unbound or "insecurely bound". Such selves are more ambiguous and ambivalent than the clearly bounded autonomous selves commonly associated with Western (and masculinist) senses of self.¹⁵ One memorable example from Davidson's empirical material is the story of a woman who feels she needs to keep her hat on as a means to contain herself inside her body (2000). Through such a seemingly external reinforcement, the woman enabled herself to find an emotional equilibrium which allowed her to exist in an otherwise terrifying geography of "peopled" spaces. Davidson's findings disrupt the often taken-for-granted sense of self as something/someone that is firmly contained within the body.¹⁶ These experiences blur distinctions of body and mind, and trouble easy categorisations of discrete physical or mental health. Instead, these (bodily) boundaries are experienced as permeable and negotiable, literally felt as a mutual constitution of self and space (see also Longhurst's (2000) work on pregnant bodies).

¹⁵ See Bondi's (2003) discussion of such accounts of self in her consideration of trainee counsellors.

¹⁶ A related experience of boundary making is in the condition of multiple personality disorder wherein the boundaries made are understood as produced within but are externally apparent in the form of different personalities presented to the world (Hacking 1995: 226).

This section has elaborated on social and spatial distances and proximities and considered the shifting nature of spatial boundaries. As the discussion of rurality suggests, rural places are more complex and dynamic than popular views suggest. Rurality is more accurately understood as the “meeting place” (Massey 1997: 322) of various distances and proximities. The exploration of social encounters in proximal spaces indicates that people consciously manage their encounters with others, for example by establishing distance through withholding information. However, a deeper look at psycho-social boundaries suggests there is a psychic component to enacting such boundaries and that these boundaries are in continual flux.

2.3 Geographies of Subjectivity and Gender

In this second section, I review theories of subjectivity and gender in order to develop my analysis of women’s experiences of emotional well-being. This section extends the previous discussion about distances, proximities, and boundaries, pushing further in the direction of psycho-social geographies. Building on the work of Sibley, Davidson and others as described in the previous section, I want to shift the focus from the significance of boundaries to the *relations* that a boundary (even a dynamic, shifting or temporary boundary) alludes to, promises, forces, or enacts. To do this, I turn to theories about subjectivity and gender which posit the importance of relational processes.

Winnicott, a paediatrician and child psychologist, coined the term ‘potential space’ to describe a hypothetical third area of human life that is “neither inside the individual

nor outside in the world of shared reality" (Winnicott 1971: 110). This is the paradoxical place where separation between mother and infant can be possible but ultimately does not occur and, in this way, the foundation for an infant's trust relationship with her/his mother is laid down. The potential space "negat[es] the idea of space and separation between the baby and the mother, and all developments derived from this phenomenon" (Winnicott 1971: 110). This space is a symbolic, potential boundary, allowing subjectivities to take shape relationally.

In *Je Tu Nous: A culture of difference* (Irigaray 1996), philosopher, Luce Irigaray and biology teacher, Helene Rouch discuss the placenta and the mediating role this plays in the relationship between the maternal body and the uterus. According to Rouch, the placenta functions both as a means of exchange and as a means of creating space between these two entities. That is, it allows for a conversation of sorts, fostering a "potential space" (Winnicott 1971) for dialogue. This possibility implies an interuterine existence of self and other. Rouch explains:

...the placenta isn't some sort of automatic protection system, which would suppress all the mother's reaction by preventing it from recognizing the embryo-fetus as other. On the contrary, there has to be a recognition of the other, of the non-self, by the mother, [...] in order for placental factors to be produced. The difference between the 'self' and other is, so to speak, continuously negotiated (Rouch in Irigaray 1993: 41).

This re-interpretation of the child-to-be's autonomy (an *autonomy-in-relation-to*) from within the mother/maternal body is radically different from, for example, the traditional Freudian psychoanalytic imaginary which accords the moment of birth with traumatic properties, a tearing away, a violent separation in order to create a discrete self. It is also different from another psychoanalytic version of child differentiation: the Lacanian mirror stage, wherein the child becomes aware of a coherent other (its reflected image), at a very specific point in its early development.¹⁷ Instead, Rouch and Irigaray, offer a re-interpretation of an originary self-other relationship. Critically, their understanding comes through a valuing of the maternal. Within some contemporary psychoanalytic thought, it is acknowledged that such feminist refiguring, emphasising the mother's significance in the development of mind, has set the scene for the emergence of the intersubjective perspective.¹⁸ The significance of this refiguring is the suggestion of the impossibility of a difference which is dependent solely on a postnatal, oedipal moment of separation. Rather, difference, alterity, is conceived of relationally from the start – figured as a most intimate distance between mother and embryonic self.

¹⁷ Jacques Lacan theorised that between 6 and 18 months, children see themselves in a mirror or an equivalent and thus identify themselves with this visibly unified subject. The paradox is that the moment of recognition is also a moment of misrecognition as the child sees something which is 'other' to its self. For further discussion of Lacan's theories, see David Macey's (1994) Introduction to Lacan's *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* or Liz Bondi's (1999a) entry on Lacanian Theory in the *Feminist Glossary of Human Geography*.

¹⁸ Jessica Benjamin writes: "The idea that the self-other dialogue is the fundamental basis for the development of mind has evolved in tandem with our revaluing of the early maternal dyad, its affective and communicative possibilities. In the classical psychoanalytic emphasis on the father, the mother's work in maintaining and producing life was taken for granted, rather than represented, and so the alienation of the subject from that which created and maintained 'his' life was reproduced" (Benjamin 1998: xv). She emphasizes then, the importance of the mother in the constitution of the mind even as the mother's subjectivity is unrepresented.

The concept of relationality has proven to be critical for poststructural feminist theorising of gender and identity. Donna Haraway remarks: "Oddly, embedded relationality is the prophylaxis for both relativism and transcendence. Nothing comes without its world, so trying to know those worlds is crucial" (Haraway 1997: 37). The critical significance of relationality is that it allows for difference, for 'more-than-one'. This is in contradistinction to Western philosophies which posit a singular subject. Instead, Irigaray argues for intersubjectivity -- a relational reading of subjectivity which expressly accounts for 'the dimension of gender as a means capable of protecting alterity' (Irigaray 2000: 53). By emphasizing gender *as* difference (versus same and other), difference is defended and as such can be productive instead of reductive. Donna Haraway reaches a similar conclusion, if from a very different theoretical starting point:

Gender is always a relationship, not a performed category of being or a possession that one can have. Gender does not pertain more to women than to men. Gender is the relation between variously constituted categories of men and women (and variously arrayed tropes), differentiated by nation, generation, class, lineage, colour, and much else (Haraway 1997: 28).

Why do two feminist scholars as diverse as Haraway and Irigaray wish to argue for relationality? Irigaray supplies an answer: "Belonging to a gender allows me to realize, in me, for me - and equally towards the other - a dialectic between subjectivity and objectivity which escapes the dichotomy between subject and

object" (Irigaray 2000: 21). Irigaray's goal is not to suggest that men and women necessarily have different subjectivities, but that within our cultural order of sameness, it is impossible to conceive of this difference (see Deutscher 2002: 12). We are therefore incapable of thinking of the process of sharing between two; at the same time, we are paradoxically, unavoidably sharing between two in order to experience gender (a subjectivity created only in-relation-to).¹⁹

Thinking relationally ensures the acknowledgement of difference. Difference has served as an anchor for a variety of social and political theories. Wendy Larner in her essay, "Theorising 'Difference' in Aotearoa/ New Zealand", acknowledged that the studies of difference by feminist geographers have provided valuable empirical knowledge but she suggests that geographical literature has tended to ignore the overarching concern of identity formation, and the relationships between identity and experience (Larner 1995: 180). In another commentary on difference as it is taken up in human geography, Jane Jacobs argues: "the increased number of precise geographies of difference develop in relation to less precise caricatures of what difference is not: be it patriarchy, globalization, modernization, whiteness, ablebodiedness, or straightness" (Jacobs 2000: 403-4). In both cases, the authors point to a kind of skimming over the surface of difference and gesture towards the analytic possibilities in taking the spatialities of difference to task. One way to do this is to focus on difference, not in opposition to sameness, but within representations of sameness. In her feminist critique of political economy, Gibson-Graham articulates: "If capitalism/man can be understood as multiple and specific; if

¹⁹ This dilemma is apparent in the tensions between ideals and practices of contemporary intimacy, discussed in more empirical detail in Chapters Six and Seven.

it is not a unity but a heterogeneity, not a sameness but a difference; if it is always becoming what it is not; if it incorporates difference within its decentered being; then noncapitalism/woman is released from its singular and subordinate status" (Gibson-Graham 1996: 44).

Irigaray, particularly in recent work (1996; 2000), re-tells the story of love in order to exercise this her theory of gender relations: a philosophy sexual difference.²⁰ Love, Irigaray argues in *I Love to You*, is something we need to consider because congealed within our contemporary version of love is a statement of subjugation. To parse the conventional phrase, 'I love you', is to expose love as that which seeks 'you' as an object. Love, in this paradigm, signals the intent to possess within an "affective economy"²¹:

Whether it is a question of our bodies or our words, we remain subject to the power or hierarchy of the one who possesses, of the one who has more or less – knowledge or sex as well as wealth – of the one who can give or make some thing, in an economy of relations (especially amorous ones) subordinate to the object, to objects, to having (Irigaray 1996: 129-30).

²⁰ Some of this material on Irigaray and love appears in a published essay (Thien 2004).

²¹ Sarah Ahmed argues: "emotions do not reside in a given subject or object. Emotions are economic; they circulate between signifiers in relationships of difference and displacement" (Ahmed 2002: 2). While Ahmed acknowledges the influence of psychoanalysis and her debt to Lacan is evident, she makes this term her own, distinguishing her argument from Lacan (and from Freud) by refusing a return to the subject: "This is extremely important: it suggests that the sideways, forwards and backwards movement of affective economies is not contained within the contours of a subject, but moves across or between subjects, objects, signs and others, which themselves are not locatable or found within the present. The unconscious is hence not the unconscious of a subject, but the failure of presence – or the failure 'to be' in the present - that constitutes the relationality of subject, objects, signs and others" (Ahmed 2002: 3).

Irigaray transforms 'I love you' into 'I love to you' in order to discourage this element of subjugation and to encourage a respectful offering, a move towards a "syntax of communication" (1996: 113). By incorporating 'to' and transforming the transitive (a verb that requires an object) to the intransitive (a verb that does not), she argues that an intersubjective relationship can be maintained between 'I' and 'you' such that neither party is possessing or possessed: "The being is thus never the whole and is always separate (from) inasmuch as it is a function of gender. It cannot, therefore, be in a state of fusion, either in childhood or in love" (Irigaray 1996: 107). This maintenance of *autonomy-in-relation-to* is central to Irigaray's theorising of gender and self.

Irigaray suggests "'we' need the intersubjective movement between us" to recognize the fundamental value of our difference (Irigaray 2000: 35). Recognising a certain porosity in this "movement between" does not serve to eliminate difference, but rather expands and deepens a reading of difference. More than simply a theoretical manoeuvre, or wordplay, Irigaray invites us to consider what takes place as we feel our way through our worldly encounters. While women might be abstract in language, women's subjectivities are not as Elspeth Probyn's precise words suggest. "Subjectivities are not abstract entities; they are always conducted *in situ*" (Probyn 2003: 293). Love, enacted as a politics of (im)possibility, blurs mental and visceral experience, moving us beyond the everyday metaphysics of mind versus body to a more complex and intersubjective state. Love re-told by Irigaray offers a suitable vantage point from which to think through the spatialities of subjectivity, gender, and emotion. Irigaray's insistence on this feminist geography resonates with what Probyn

(2003) has called the “spatial imperative” of subjectivity. The recognition of difference is fundamental to this “spatial imperative”:

Emphasizing the absolute spatial nature of the processes of subjectivity should also remind us of where and how we are interpolated. Instead of plastering over those differences, we need to stop and address them. Sometimes that stopping will result in silence. And that slash between dis/connections should indicate a pause -- a moment of non-recognition that may be expressed as simply as ‘wow, you really are different from me’. The point is not to stay caught in that moment of bewilderment or enchantment: that would only reinscribe difference as an exotic, fetishized or denied quality (Probyn 2003: 298).

It is an (im)possible affair: to measure the self by moving through other’s spaces. As Probyn points out, we see our selves as a very private project, but in fact our subjectivities are intensely communal, “a public affair” (2003: 290). Irigaray writes in an essay on women’s health: “Love may perhaps require secrecy, but it also needs culture and a social context....Such progress is necessary for the development of the human order” (Irigaray 1993: 104). Love is one manifestation of a publicly private state and as such illustrates point that (mobile and gendered) subjectivities are always *autonomous-in-relation-to*.

This reiteration of situated and spatialised knowledges has proven an effective challenge to the “transparent space” of “social-scientific masculinity” (Rose 1993: 40).²² In her influential conception of paradoxical space, geographer Gillian Rose (1993) specifically addresses the space associated with “the subject of feminism”. In Rose’s rendering, this subject refers to an assumed identity which attempts to escape only occupying space other than that of the ‘master’ (male) subject. That is, this subject signifies “a movement from the space represented by/in a representation, by/in a discourse, by/in a sex-gender system, to the space not represented yet implied (unseen)” (de Lauretis 1987: 26). This paradoxical space offers the potential for critique of the authority of the master subject in that it discovers the spaces that the masculinist subject cannot see, therefore disrupting the masculinist spatial claims to know. Such a space also allows for the explicit embodiment of space, in contrast to the disembodied spectator of transparent space (Rose 1993). Rose notes that the feminist preoccupation with a paradoxical ‘elsewhere’ place or space exists because the subject of feminism has to believe that *something* exists beyond patriarchal regimes; there must be a space beyond representation.²³ That this resistance thus becomes unrepresentable, at least in a discursive sense, is another level of the paradox. That it is simultaneously imaginary and real (in the sense of the material world) is another. In Vera Chouinard’s assessment, such “feminist and postmodern critiques urge us [to recognize] the multiple ways in which structural

²² The role of the visual, G. Rose (1993) argues, has always been critical to masculine knowledge claims. The gaze, in terms of the voyeurism of social sciences towards the close of the nineteenth century, was directed towards the production and control of societal experience. The standpoint of the voyeur is a fixed place; for the (male) directors of the geographic gaze, space is everywhere that they are not.

²³ Paradoxical spaces are rife in feminist imaginaries: Trinh T. Minh-ha’s “interstitial space” (Trinh, 1992), the spaces of Haraway’s *FemaleMan* (Haraway 1997), and Irigaray’s “culture of difference” (Irigaray 1993) are just three examples.

constraints...and agency become manifest in real-world geographies of oppression and struggle” (Chouinard 1997: 373). To paraphrase Catherine MacKinnon (1987), it might be said that poststructuralism has provided the theory and feminism has provided the political practice for examining subjectivity. The spatial understandings contributed by geographers have brought us to new frontiers of understanding the spatial patterning of gender relations.

This section has reviewed theories of gender and subjectivity. In particular, I have focused on feminist, psychoanalytically-inspired, and post-structuralist attentions to relationality, difference, and the intimate distances of being *autonomous-in-relation-to*. As the above discussion suggests, an acknowledgement of relationality accommodates the shifting, political and paradoxical nature of identities *in situ*. This offers the theoretical basis from which to investigate geographies of women’s emotional well-being.

2.4 Geographies of Emotion

In this last section, I turn to reviewing a small but diverse literature investigating spatialities of emotion. As the theories of gender and subjectivity discussed above suggest, we are relational beings -- we ‘take place’ in complex and intersubjective ways. As I examine these recent theoretical approaches to emotional geographies, including feminist and psychoanalytic geographies, and analyses of affect, I am interested in how these approaches attend (or not) to the demands of being ‘*autonomous-in-relation-to*’.

The impact of psychoanalysis is of particular importance in the study of geographies of emotion as it has both therapeutically and theoretically dealt with the psychic realms of the self. Indeed, we might consider how we could possibly avoid the influence of psychoanalysis, so thoroughly is it a part of the milieu from which human geography draws, and within which western human geographers live (Bondi 1999: 15).²⁴ Psychoanalysis is "first and foremost an account and a theory of personal meaning" (Chodorow 1999: 129). As a theoretical framework, cultural theorist Sara Ahmed (1998) suggests that the significance of a psychoanalytic perspective is that it allows the issue of the subject to be a question, in accord with poststructural sympathies. In this attention to both 'sense' and 'sensibility', psychoanalytic approaches have both substantive and theoretical synergies with my investigation into women's emotional well-being in Shetland.

Psychoanalytically-inspired scholarship has both champions and detractors (see, for example, the debate between sociologist Deborah Lupton and clinical psychologist David Pilgrim: Lupton 1997; Lupton 1998b; Pilgrim 1998). A major critique of psychoanalysis identified by geographers Chris Philo and Hester Parr is that of individualism (in opposition to arguments of universalism that proliferate in critical appraisals of anthropology and phenomenology). This critique runs as follows:

²⁴ Thus the trailer to a recent documentary featuring a father and son charged for paedophilia, *Capturing the Friedmans*, asks the audience to consider: "What kind of family could produce such a crime?" Behind such a question lie all kinds of 'common-sense' notions about the psychology and psycho-dynamics of family units. These common-sense notions spring from culturally absorbed (and arguably distorted) versions of Freudian and psychoanalytic renderings of sexuality, perversion, and familial psycho-social patterning.

that psychoanalysis seems to retreat so deeply into the specificities of individual psyches and behaviour that it can tell us nothing about the making of collective human *actions* involved in the production of spatial systems at scales beyond that of the home and neighbourhood (Philo and Parr 2003: 284).

But, as Chodorow argues, the idea that cultural meaning and personal meaning are separate is a false division: "In the psyche they are inextricable and go toward making up subjective meaning" (Chodorow 1999: 148). If we understand the self and the space of self (en)action as relational we are attending to the 'in here' and 'out there' simultaneously. The work of human geographers like Pile and Sibley has "traced in rich detail how psycho-social experience can be seen playing out in worldly spaces at varying scales from the home to the city to the nation" (Philo and Parr 2003: 284-5).²⁵ Indeed, Sibley's work on social and spatial exclusion as discussed earlier incorporates both the psychic and the socio-cultural elements of human experience.

Recently, geographical work on the psychoanalytic concept of affect has made a small but noticeable emergence due to writing by high-profile cultural geographers (Thrift 2004), and essays in high-profile geography journals such as *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* (McCormack 2003). 'Affect' is a term with a distinctly psychological pedigree. In Freudian psychoanalytic theory, affect is a term used, at times loosely, in relationship to instincts, drives, and emotions. Thus in his

²⁵ Philo and Parr express their hope for "grounded studies" rather than the use of psychoanalytic accounts "utilized in splendid isolation" (2003: 291).

early work on the unconscious, Freud speaks of 'an affective or emotional impulse' (Freud 1991 [1915]: 180). Irene Matthis (2000) draws on a close reading of Freud's later work, and specifically his paper, "An Outline of Psycho-Analysis" (Freud 1949 [1940]), to develop the notion of affect. She suggests that 'affect' is a matrix that encompasses both feelings and emotions, and as such that it is a 'higher order' level of organization. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick argues that affect is an "immediate *instrumentality*, the defining orientation toward a specified aim and end different from itself, that finally distinguishes the drives from the affects" (Sedgwick 2003: 19, emphasis in the original). In this rendering, in contrast to drives, affects have "greater freedom" as regards time, aim, and object and can be "attached to things, people, ideas, sensations, relations, activities, ambitions, institutions, and any number of other things, including other affects" (Sedgwick 2003: 19). Impulse, mode of organization, instrumentality – what each of these definitions has in common is the sense that affect is the *how* of emotion. That is, affect describes (in both the communicative and literal sense) the motion of emotion.

Yet, perhaps as a consequence of reaching for this 'how' of emotion, the emerging geographies of affect have a technical feel. In this work, the theoretical employment of affect suggests a desire to distance affect (and its proponents). For example, Thrift indicates his discomfort with anything that might be perceived as "nice and cuddly": "one all too common interpretation of what adding affect will contribute" (Thrift 2004: 58). The jettisoning of the term 'emotion' in favour of the term 'affect' in this work seems compelled by an underlying revisiting, if in a more theoretically sophisticated register, of the binary trope of emotion as negatively positioned in

opposition to reason, as objectionably soft and implicitly feminised. The effort to avoid 'touchy-feely' versions of emotion and any "absurd", "silly" or "wrongheaded" ideas (Thrift 2004: 60) perhaps unsurprisingly results in a concentration on the inhuman/transhuman and the virtual (McCormack 2003; Thrift 2004). The humanity of emotion is held at a deliberate distance in this work.

Thrift (2004: 64), for example, offers a wide-ranging examination of 'affect' as it is employed theoretically, noting that disparate theoretical starting points for understanding affect are united by a dependency on "a sense of push in the world." In particular, Thrift focuses on affect as "always emergent" which he claims is best described by Brian Massumi: "Affects are virtual synesthetic perspectives anchored in (functionally limited by) the actually existing, particular things that embody them" (Massumi 2002: 35-6 quoted in Thrift 2004: 63). McCormack (2003) also draws from Massumi and is similarly excited by the potential of the virtual: "Affect, for Massumi, is unqualified intensity, implicated in the sensible materiality of corporeality, but in a way that opens up the actuality of experience to what Massumi, following, Deleuze, calls the *virtual*". For Massumi (2002), as quoted in McCormack, the virtual refers to "the pressing crowd of incipencies and tendencies...a realm of *potential*" (McCormack 2003: 495). In describing his research encounters with Dance Movement Therapy, McCormack describes an adherence to "a grammar of affective relations that divides the world up into 'the space of my feeling' and the inaccessible affect of another" (McCormack 2003: 500). Emotion, he argues, is a limiting concept, one that "refuses to grant sensibility and sensation the freedom of a movement and force that exists prior to such economies of

meaning” (2003: 495). Affect, however, “while it is implicated in corporeal sensibility ... is never reducible to the personal quality of emotion” (McCormack 2003: 501). Furthermore, McCormack argues that the “creative potential of affect is arrested when one attempts to quantify or qualify its position as personal” (2003: 496).

Affects that are virtual are ‘almost’, they are potential, they are syn(es)thetic, they are by McCormack’s definition, impersonal. The particular “things” that embody affects are perceived as a limitation, an anchor, literally a drag. Seeking a way to work with these (perceived to be limiting and disorienting) structures, Thrift is preoccupied throughout his essay with the metaphor of engineering:

affect is more and more likely to be actively engineered with the result that it is becoming something more akin to the networks of pipes and cables that are of such importance in providing the basic mechanics and root textures of urban life...a set of constantly performing relays and junctions that are laying down all manner of new emotional histories and geographies (Thrift 2004: 58).

He further suggests his paper constructs “the foundations of a new kind of cultural engineering...upon which and with which new forms of political practice that value democracy as a functional disunity will be able to be built” (Thrift 2004: 75).

This ethical, even moral, framing is key to Thrift's reading of affect. Thrift suggests there is a danger in the corporate and state efforts to control affect and thus those who are worried by such developments must produce alternative interpretations and analyses: "what is being aimed for is a navigation of feeling which goes beyond the simple romanticism of somehow maximising individual emotions" (Thrift 2004: 68). One crucial move on his agenda is to seek out a positive engagement with the world: "rather than make private bargains with misery, a politics of hope" (Thrift 2004: 68). McCormack also seeks an ethical agenda in his participant observation with a Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) group, but claims it is

not a matter of seeking to delve behind the aesthetic surface of the corporeal, to expose the hidden relations of power that underpin it. Indeed the moment at which such an imperative takes over is precisely the moment at which an encounter with a practice like DMT *ceases to become ethical* (McCormack 2003: 502 ,emphasis in the original).

The emphasis on seeking to positively engage with and to honour what is on the surface, signals a politics of intent. Irigaray's poststructural feminist agenda also honours a politics of intent in the impossible task of identifying sexual difference as an ethical movement away from patriarchy. For me, however, there is a difference in these two sets of approaches in the respective understandings of the subjective spaces of intent. In the case of Thrift and McCormack's use of Massumi's theorizations to "charge the actual with the animating potential of the virtual" (McCormack 2003:

501), the prescriptions for a politics of change seem to be founded on an unreal and apolitical basis: on a 'virtual' world where an undifferentiated people have the power to make bargains with their fortunes, and where an acknowledgement of power relations can be left behind as a precisely unethical movement. These moves can surely only be made when and where power is already (with)held.

In the desire to push past the humanity of emotional experience, the valorisation of affect through mechanistic metaphors of pipes and cables builds over a rich field of potential understanding. 'Affect' as a term and a concept has been employed here in masculinist, technocratic, and distancing ways. Employed differently, a psychoanalytic sensibility can produce a more positive reading of emotion. For example, feminist geographer Liz Bondi draws from psychoanalytic theory to advise an attention to relationality, intersubjectivity, and an always incomplete being: an "assum[ption] that mutual understanding is always partial and incomplete, and that we are all somehow enigmatic and ineffable in our being" (1999: 19).²⁶ Similarly, Irigaray builds her paradoxical ethical/political agenda on the knowledge that we are only 'autonomous-in-relation-to'. Irigaray's work seeks to find difference, not through distancing, but through acknowledging the highly subjective and necessarily incomplete constitution of our psychic, interpersonal, political, and ethical spaces. While Irigaray also draws on metaphor, she attempts to rework the symbolic (language, speech) that has cast women oppositionally (as purely biological, emotional, and weak): "[I]nstead of remaining a different gender, the feminine has become, in our languages, the non-masculine, that is to say an abstract nonexistent

²⁶ I attend to further uses of psychoanalytic theory by geographers in Chapter Three.

reality” (Irigaray 1993: 20). Irigaray, instead, seeks to re-articulate the relationship between women and language in order that women may acquire a positivity, a place from which to be “heard as women” (1993: 20).

In seeking to find a metaphor of “positivity”, the figuring of an “emotional subject” or an “emotional self” offers a more satisfactory alternative to the mechanistic visions springing from the work on affect. Considering the production and reproduction of an “emotional subject” (Harding and Pribram 2002) informs our understanding of the relationship between the self and the places of our (en)actions. Cultural theorists, Jennifer Harding and E. Deirdre Pribram argue that the “ways in which the subject acts emotionally are also part and parcel of the reproduction of ... specific categories²⁷ of subjects and the power relations that constitute them” (Harding and Pribram 2002: 421). Following Judith Butler, they assert: “The produced subject, whose production is ongoing and never complete, acts within horizons that constitute the very potential for acting” (Harding and Pribram 2002: 421). The mutual constitution of selves and spaces is encompassed in this figure. Sociologist, Deborah Lupton argues similarly for attention to an emotional self. We use emotional concepts, Lupton notes, to “give meaning and provide explanation for our lives, for why we respond to life events, other people, material artefacts and places in certain ways, why we might tend to follow patterns of behaviour throughout our lives” (Lupton 1998a: 6). An emotional subject offers an intersubjective means to negotiating our place in the world, co-produced in cultural discourses of emotion and well as through psycho-social narratives.

²⁷ They suggest gender, class, sexuality, and race as such categories (Harding and Pribram 2002: 421).

In this last section, I have considered a suite of approaches to geographies of emotion. A review of a recent preoccupation with analyses of affect reveals an attention to the virtual and transhuman. This focus is inadequate for addressing the issues of relationality identified in the preceding section. Turning away from this technocratic and distancing perspective on affect, I have moved towards the revisioning of emotion as part of an intersubjective process, as emphasised by some feminist and cultural scholars. This view acknowledges that distances between “us” are always relational, and indeed that as emotional subjects we are comprised of our own most intimate distances.

2.5 Conclusion

This review has considered the social and spatial distances, proximities, and boundaries; the dynamics of subjectivity as an integral aspect of theorising gender; and a selection of theoretical approaches to investigating emotional geographies. I began by exploring social and spatial distances, proximities, and boundaries. As the ensuing discussion of constructs of rurality, proximal social encounters and psycho-social boundaries suggested, experiences of place involve a complex set of processes incorporating psycho-social dimensions. In the second section, I came to theoretical terms with gender, emphasising feminist, psychoanalytically-inspired, and post-structuralist attentions to relationality, difference, and the intimate distances of being *autonomous-in-relation-to*. I proposed that such attention allows for the shifting, political and paradoxical nature of identities which always take place *in situ*. From a feminist poststructural perspective, both spaces and subjects are gendered and

engendering in a complex meld of individual and social ways. Finally, in the last section, I argued for the inseparability of intersubjectivity from our social and spatial encounters. Threading together the feminist poststructuralist insights about subjection, relationality, and the gendered spaces of emotion, I concluded with the figure of the emotional subject. In place of other metaphors, an emotional subject evokes the fundamental importance of emotion to understanding and hence to experiencing and communicating our relational sense of self – to locating our subjectivity within a “geographical sensibility” (Anderson and Smith 2001).

This review serves to theoretically ground my investigation of women’s emotional well-being in Shetland, establishing the basic philosophical and political agendas on which this research is premised. Ultimately, I am arguing for the relevance and indeed efficacy of a multi-layered psychic, social, and spatial analysis as I proceed in the substantive chapters of this thesis to demonstrate the relational and gendered dimensions of emotion. The interlinked social and spatial aspects of emotional exchange are important and I address this in my exploration of Shetland’s gender, place, and culture in Chapter Four. I go beyond a social constructionist reading of emotion, such that emotions are only produced or constructed by particular societies and places, to consider psycho-social experiences of places as related in accounts of emotional well-being in Chapter Five. Finally, I offer an analysis of the expressions and experiences of intimacy as a means of pursuing understandings of the psychic and intersubjective encounter between self and other in Chapter Six.

In the empirical material that follows, I have sought insights into processes of gender and subjectivity vis-à-vis women’s expressions of, attitudes towards, and techniques

for managing emotions. Such experiences and expressions of emotions offer a rich complexity of material for thinking about how the world is mediated by feeling. In particular, an analysis of emotions as relational, building on feminist theorising of relationality) can be the vehicle by which we move away from the derogatory and reductionist view of emotions *as* female. The insights offered by psychoanalysis, in combination with gender theory, and the poststructural analysis of space that some geographical work affords, combine to make a truly sustained push at the complex matrix of emotion, gender and spatiality.

Researching Emotions: Feeling your way

3.1 Introduction

A door slammed loudly somewhere in the house – a sharp echo of the front door I had just closed behind me. Venturing forth into an ominously silent home, I could taste a thick fug of anger and resentment, as palpable as cigarette smoke. A quick glance confirmed that my housemate was not visible in any of the communal rooms, but her bedroom door was firmly shut. My own bedroom door had a yellow post-it attached with the terse note: 'Jo rang'. Feelings of guilt, anxiety, and concern overwhelmed me as I quietly shut myself into my own bedroom. Two women, two rooms, a very small island, and one very big emotional tangle (Fieldnotes: February 9, 2003).

My geographical inquiry into the emotional well-being of Shetland women landed me in the heart of a complex network of relationships. This excerpt from my fieldnotes describes more than an ordinary spat in a shared flat. This was my field site and these women, the one behind her bedroom door and the one who left the message, were participants in my research. At the same time, they were my social companions, and I theirs. Delicate lines of loyalty, jealousy, care, and friendship hung between us. Incorporating emotions into my research and, in my case, making emotions the subject of my inquiry, requires something that the norms of investigative science cannot provide. Without the safety and authority of the lab coat (sometimes I long for a lab coat!), I am as vulnerable as anyone else involved in my research. I am potentially powerless, misunderstood, wounded, exposed in the certainty of making mistakes. No wonder scientists have preferred to (attempt to) separate emotions from their investigations.

This chapter considers this and other methodological aspects of the thesis. The preceding chapter has considered the 'why' of my research aims. In this section, I consider how, when, and from whom I gained empirical information for my project. I begin by setting out the basic requirements of research that seeks information about women's perceptions about emotional well-being in Shetland. In considering how to undertake this research, I had to consider both the subject matter and my positioning as a feminist scholar. As a feminist geographer, I wished to ensure my research design reflected concerns about gender and power within research encounters. In this consideration, I had a relative wealth of material to consult and I describe how I assessed these debates below in order to conduct feminist and qualitative research in

an informed fashion. More difficult was feeling my way to an appropriate empirical process by which I could enquire about emotional well-being. There are few empirical examples of research into geographies of emotional well-being. I draw on research into geographies of psychoanalytic spaces and counselling practices which influenced how I approached this task. I describe how these debates and this existing research influenced the design of this research project. I outline the details of the ethnographic methods I employed in the research, focusing mainly on interviews and participant observation, and describing how I developed interview schedules, questionnaires, and other research tools. I describe how I developed and applied a coding framework to analyse the subsequent data. I conclude by arguing for the importance of continually assessing methodological practice.

3.2 Researching Emotional Well-being

3.2.1 'Researcher-Researched' Relations: fielding feminist geography

Methodological debates within feminist geography illustrate the unwieldy juxtaposition of feminist scholarship and political engagements, as researchers strive to faithfully and usefully represent the spaces, places, and people of research encounters (Staeheli and Lawson 1994; Katz 1996; Moss 2002). Feminist geographers have drawn on a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods (see Nightingale 2003). The post-positivist trajectory of feminist geography has, however, in response to geography's enlightenment 'tradition' and also reflecting feminist

scholarship more generally²⁸, produced a body of mainly qualitative research. While the particular qualitative methods employed have varied, including ethnography (i.e. Marshall 2002), the use of video (Kindon 1999), and participatory research approaches (Kesby et al. 2004), the research shares an emphasis on interviews as a primary method of data collection.

Interviews are the paradigmatic feminist research technique (Greene 2000: 20) because, ideally, they offer a space for women to tell their stories, in their own words, "an antidote to centuries of ignoring women's ideas altogether or having men speak for women" (Reinharz 1992: 19). Yet, the use of interviews as a means of redressing the exploitation of women simultaneously conceals and reveals relations of power within this research encounter. In recognition of this complexity, many analyses of feminist research concentrate on issues of power and equality as they play out in interviews (Mies 1983; Finch 1984; Oakley 1987; Ribbens 1989; Cotterill 1992; Reinharz 1992; Ong 1995; Millen 1997; G. Rose 1997; England 2002).

These different analyses vary considerably. Maria Mies (1983: 121-22) contends that female researchers are better able to study "exploited groups" due to "their own subjective experience of sexist discrimination." Janet Finch (Finch 1984: 81) proposes that women researchers may be in a better position to exploit women research subjects as they are able to create or participate in a more intimate research setting than their male counterparts. Though Mies and Finch come to different conclusions, they both work with an essentialist understanding of women. Female

²⁸ Tellingly, the entry for "Qualitative Methods" in the *Feminist Glossary of Human Geography* simply states: "See 'Feminist Methodology'" (McDowell and Sharp 1999: 225).

researchers, according to both Mies and Finch, whether empathetic or exploitative, are capable of these behaviours *because* they are women.

Other feminist analyses have articulated a more nuanced understanding of the relations of researcher and researched during an interview. For example, in her research about mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationships, British sociologist Pamela Cotterill (1992) argues that the balance of power may shift back and forth during an interview, leaving the researcher and the researched alternately vulnerable. The researched is able to exert power in a number of ways, including refusing to answer questions, refusing to interpret proffered information, or withholding particular information leaving the researcher vulnerable to confusion, frustration, or distress (Cotterill 1992: 599; Ong 1995; G. Rose 1997). However, Cotterill's notion of power, as something that leaves both the researcher and researched alternatively vulnerable, has two related implications: first, that power is a simple exchange, such that when one person's power increases, another's decreases, and second, that power will be necessarily repressive when it is enacted, creating a space of vulnerability for the other individual or group in the equation.

Ong observes that the researcher-researched dynamic is more complex than this simple exchange of power: "if one considers power as a decentralized, shifting, and productive force, animated in networks of relations rather than possessed by individuals, then ethnographic subjects can exercise power in the production of ethnographic knowledges" (Ong 1995: 353). This Foucauldian 'analytics' of power "suggests, that we are all, to some degree, caught up in its circulation—oppressors

and oppressed” (Hall 2001: 77).²⁹ Furthermore, as Foucault proposes, and Ong highlights, power can be a creative force:

[P]ower] doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but...it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms of knowledge, produces discourses. It needs to be thought of as a productive network which runs through the whole social body (Foucault 1980: 119).

Both researcher and researched may be engaged in the exercise of power, either as a repressive or as a creative force, or presumably, as both simultaneously. This is not to suggest that power relations in an interview can be simply summed up or that a researcher's responsibilities are negated. Kim England notes of her research with banking elites: “I am ultimately accountable for my research, for my intrusions into people's lives as well as my representations... in published accounts” (England 2002: 210).

Nevertheless, it remains critical for researchers to acknowledge and continually problematize the play of power in research encounters. Vera Chouinard challenges feminist geographers to “come to grips with the differential power relations between researched and ‘researched’ or between the producers of legitimized knowledge and the subjects of that knowledge” (Chouinard 1997: 374). Chouinard suggests that

²⁹ As opposed to a theory of power, Foucault states his preference for an analytics of power: “a definition of the specific domain formed by relations of power, and toward a determination of the instruments that will make possible its analysis” (Foucault 1990 [1978]: 82).

feminist geographers must practically address and debate this issue, both to avoid the “social and intellectual marginalization of research subjects in the knowledge-production process” and to “take current challenges to hegemonic knowledges and discourses seriously” (Chouinard 1997: 374).

3.2.2 Whose Representations?: Naming, (self) Defining, Giving Voice

Chouinard’s distinction between ‘subject’ and ‘knowledge’ touches on a core tension around power within feminist methodologies: the uneasy relationship between a feminist practice or politics of change and the “critical negativity of [feminism’s] theory” (de Lauretis 1987: 26). Feminist *theory* has necessarily functioned to reveal the ‘otherness’ of women’s positions, the reverse image, the negative, while feminist political *action* has been characterized by efforts to (re)affirm women’s collective power (to make negative, positive). The result of this paradox, writes de Lauretis, is “the condition of feminism here and now: the tension of a twofold pull in contrary directions” (de Lauretis 1987: 26). Given this tension, it is unsurprising that feminist researchers have a particular anxiety about representing researcher-researched relations. The central issue is how to respectfully represent the identities of those embodying research, while remaining consistent with the change-oriented project of feminist research. The complexities of such representations reveal oppositional intellectual and political agendas. There is a seeming contradiction between making space for women to represent themselves, and challenging the existing names or subject positions available to women. The politics around naming research subjects epitomize the competing agendas of feminist research.

Social science research routinely assigns pseudonyms to its 'subjects' in order to maintain their anonymity. DeVault (1990: 106) notes that "[r]esearchers routinely indicate that they have changed respondents' names and some details of their lives in order to protect their subjects' anonymity, but they rarely report in detail on which details they have changed and how." Aside from this explicit naming involved in disguising identities, researchers name the researched in a number of ways, by deciding how to interpret and then to represent individual and group subject positions. The researcher's ability to name is a demonstration of power through the construction and production of knowledge. Consequently, naming is charged with at least two tensions for feminist researchers: a resistance to taking on the masculinist position of the 'namer' (with all the assumptions and presumptions that might entail) and a related resistance to potentially compounding the historical mis-naming of women.

Feminist researchers have sought to equalise some of this tension by always naming or 'locating' the researcher's various subject positions, a practice that is now *de rigueur* in much human geography research. In this practice, researchers are influenced by Haraway's insightful critique: "[t]he search for a 'full' and total position is the search for a fetishized perfect subject of oppositional history" (Haraway 1988: 586). Haraway advocates instead for "politics and epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating....the view from a body, always a complex, contradictory, structuring, and structured body, versus the view from above, from nowhere, from simplicity" (Haraway 1988: 589).

The need for a researcher to locate her/himself has raised ethical and moral questions. How much complexity and contradiction should a researcher expect to share with research participants? Katz (1996) describes her fieldwork decision to represent her religious, financial and marital status in ways that fit more comfortably with her research setting in the Sudan. She feared that 'the truth' of her personal circumstances would negatively influence the community she hoped to interact with. However, as her research intent was to understand "the practical responses to capitalism in the everyday practices through which knowledge was produced, shared and used" (Katz 1996: 173), her decision could be read as eliminating a possible set of responses to her embodiment of a western capitalist lifestyle (for example, her financial security and status as partnered but unmarried). This strategic concealment raises ethical considerations, as well as possibly hampering the research effort.

In later work, Katz has continued to adopt the strategy of distancing her work from any identity markers she has, though not without reservations:

I simultaneously question my decisions to keep the focus of my inquiries at some distance from my own identifications and understand them as appropriate, given the crises facing these groups and the need to build a broad-based political response to them. This, of course, puts me on the tricky borders attaching research, practice, advocacy, and activism (Katz 1996: 174-5).

At the site of these 'tricky borders', the overt expression of feminist intentions has provided another dilemma for self-locating the researcher. Feminist subject positions have been construed, both explicitly and implicitly, as distancing or alienating in research with women who are perceived to be non-feminist. In her research with a group of women whom she describes as "unsympathetic" to feminist aims, sociologist Diane Millen (1997) indicates that her feminist agenda was not made explicit in order to avoid distancing her participants. Millen argues that a concentration on feminist methodology may be an obstacle in research with non-feminist women and suggests that feminist researchers work from an epistemological vantage point instead (that is, defining research as feminist by virtue of the values it upholds, rather than by the methods it has employed).

Rose (1997) provides another way of examining the dilemma of naming in the researcher-researched dynamic. She questions the efficacy of self-definition of those involved in her research, suggesting that if marginalised groups are already illegible to the dominant culture, the move to express an identity might be counter-productive to that goal:

To be named is to make sense, to be made sense of; it is to be positioned in the realm of the legible, the knowable, the translatable. It is to be made vulnerable to knowledge; to be produced through discourse, to be produced (G. Rose 1997: 187).

These various examples suggest that processes of naming must be carefully thought through. Trinh T. Minh-ha (1992: 173) cautions us that the ability to be a 'naming subject' should be accompanied by an imperative to avoid 'arrested meanings and fixed categories':

'Non-categorical' thinking sees to it that the power to name be constantly exposed in its limits. So in terms of subject positioning you can only thrive on fragile ground. You are always working in this precarious space where you constantly run the risk of falling on one side or the other. You are walking right on the edge and challenging both sides so they cannot simply be collapsed into one (Trinh 1992: 173).

Trinh does not argue that naming must or should be avoided, but that the tensions of this 'precarious space' need to be acknowledged in the process.

3.2.3 Resisting representation

The contradiction of much feminist research is between a desire to both validate the knowledges of the researched and to politicise that knowledge, between, as Chouinard (1997) indicates, subjects and knowledge(s), between researchers and research participants. The desire to validate women's experiential knowledge is a historically integral component of feminist methodologies. Reinharz suggests that, "[t]o the extent that feminism is change-oriented by definition, all feminist research has action components" (Reinharz 1992: 196). The "action" of research may be as

simple (or rather, as complex) as seeking to raise the consciousness of the participant and to affirm her realities (Millen 1997). However, this notion of consciousness raising, evocative of second wave feminist activities, has been extensively critiqued, particularly by black American feminists who argue it promotes white feminist agendas and de-emphasises women's diverse representations (Lorde 1984). The notion of empowerment, in many ways the modern version of consciousness-raising, has also been critiqued.

[W]hat we as researchers and feminists might see as empowering women by giving them the tools to analyse their situation in terms of gender and power may actually *disempower* them in the short term by undermining immediate coping strategies which do not involve any long-term structural change for women and which the researcher has therefore judged as being based on sexist or non-feminist beliefs or action (Millen 1997: sec. 2.3).

Despite these perceptive efforts to question the fixity of power, 'empowerment', especially the capacity of a researcher to 'empower' the researched, still has currency and researchers continue to subscribe to this agenda.³⁰ Katz (1996) is careful to set her work in central-eastern Sudan in the context of "the larger political project of transforming oppressive and exploitative social relations and [to] suggest a direction for field research that offers the possibility of more direct political engagement"

³⁰ No less than 307 articles contain the words 'empowerment' and 'women' in their titles in the ZETOC database. ZETOC provides access to the British Library's electronic table of contents of journals and conference proceedings from 1993 and is updated daily.

(171) – a description that resounds with the rhetoric of empowerment. What this framing leaves out, while paradoxically claiming to honour them, are the desires (be they complicit, resistant, indifferent, or otherwise) of the researched subject.

In her narrative of research with a coupon plant in Mexico, Wright (1997) finds she is unable to represent to her own satisfaction, the actions of her research subject, Gloria. During the course of Wright's narrative, Gloria, a Mexican supervisor at the Tres Reyes factory, uses various strategies to move into a managerial position. Despite wishing to understand Gloria's moves within factory politics as resistant to normative subject positions of 'Woman' and 'Mexican', Wright acknowledges that Gloria demonstrates both resistance and compliance (Wright 1997: 281). Wright goes on to note that Gloria, herself, "maintains that her actions are anything but resistance" (1997: 281):

On one of the occasions where I pushed the issue of resistance with Gloria, who usually succeeded in resisting my persistent inquiries into this topic, she explained that she was not protesting corporate policy or trying to cause any troubles for the firm. Her actions, she said, stemmed from her allegiance to Tres Reyes (Wright 1997: 298).

While Wright is attempting to theorize "the relationship between a woman as a social agent and the ideology of Woman that she wants to escape" (Wright 1997: 281), Gloria is busy escaping Wright's categories, not so much resisting or complying, as she is manipulating the circumstances (both employment and research project) to her

best advantage. Tellingly, once Gloria is firmly established in her managerial capacity, she indicates her participation in Wright's research is over.

Faced with the recalcitrance of the subject of her research, Wright questions if resistance to social representations counts when it does not directly resist the hierarchy beyond it. She does not, however, explore the logical extension of this to her own research agenda, namely that Gloria enacts a certain measure of both resistance and compliance to the interventions of Wright. Gloria chooses not to discuss all her efforts to attain management level status with Wright (who then relies on Gloria's friend for information), but she does allow Wright initially to make her central to the research encounter (presumably a strategic maneuver to enhance her plans for promotion). Thus Wright's research conveys more than she explicitly intends. Chodorow argues that such transparency is the value of a good case study:

Unlike research based on abstracted variables or theoretical arguments alone, the narrative and analytic complexity of good case accounts of all sorts (ethnographic, clinical, life historical, based on qualitative interviews, and so on) enables the reader to find that which the writer does not necessarily wish to foreground (1999: 143).

For example, the dissonance between researcher and researched revealed in Wright's narrative is partly due to multiple understandings of resistance. Gloria does not agree that she is enacting the resistance that Wright is searching for. Wright is attempting to fulfill her own political aims, and certainly, the notion of resistance as social

action for social change is strongly imbedded in feminist politics³¹. As Katz ruefully notes of her own interest in seeking out resistance: “My insistence on finding particular patterns of resistance that might inform my own political practices probably blinded me to some of the more resilient—albeit discomfiting to me—sites of resistance” (Katz 1996: 173).

Rose (1997) describes a subtle resistance enacted by community arts workers who used the terms (language) of their funders strategically, while simultaneously distancing themselves from that language of funding. That is, they used the terms they needed (that held and made use of the power of that language), but in a way divested of the “original” meaning, so that “the vocabulary of that language is [...] qualified, parodied, critiqued and refused” (G. Rose 1997: 192). Rose argues that juxtaposing those without power with the power to name/define results in a need for translation. The methodological difficulty for researchers is in how to translate such resistance and resistant subjects. This kind of translation is an ongoing methodological consideration for the feminist researcher.

3.2.4 An informed approach

Informed by the above debates, I chose to develop a qualitative research design. This research project needed to access women’s perceptions and experiences of emotional well-being, a highly subjective matter. In general, I feel that such experiences are difficult to quantify and a mainly qualitative methodology is more suitable to the

³¹ Consider, for example, famous acts of feminist resistance such as women placing a banner at the New York Stock Exchange to protest male domination of Wall Street in 1973, or Mary Wollstonecraft’s tract on women’s rights.

aims of this project. As detailed in this section, I carefully considered the various issues at stake in choosing such a qualitative approach, including the ways researchers and researched come together (or not), the spatial and political aspects of these interactions, the difficulties of representing research encounters, and the techniques for gathering research data.

3.3 Contours, practices, and ethics of researching emotions

In this section, I consider whether researching emotional and well-being requires particular skills and/or ethical considerations above and beyond the research concerns discussed above. I begin by considering the practice of story-telling as a strategy for collecting emotional content and for identifying an emotional subject. I then examine psychoanalytically-inspired and geographic qualitative research for insights into the exchanges of interpersonal encounters within research. In particular, I note the need for self-reflexivity, and the complications and limitations of this methodological practice. I conclude this section by reflecting on the ethics of researching emotions and considering the contours of a methodology suitable for research into emotional geographies.

3.3.1 Feelings, Stories, Subjects

Rosaldo suggests feelings are expressed through our stories: "Feelings are not substances to be discovered in our blood but social practices organized by stories that we both enact and tell. They are structured by our forms of understanding" (Rosaldo 1984: 143). If feelings are the culturally determined practices by which we story our

selves³², our emotional selves are expressed in the way we narrate our place in the world. One possible way to illuminate the emotional subject is to consider how we express our selves in stories. However, stories are not an innocent form of communication. As the research below suggests, there is a multiplicity of stories available with which to 'tell' the self, and there are politics to the processes by which we produce and reproduce our narratives of self.

We know there is a division between presented *stories* about an individual's personal life and the *life* itself (Jamieson 1998). We know this, in part, because we know experientially how we are capable of operating on multiple levels – for example, we might chat with a neighbour about the weather while processing more private emotions about a death in the family. Or, we may choose to share a *version* of our personal feelings: explaining the death to the neighbour, but not detailing the particular contours of the relationship, not explicitly telling the neighbour how we are intimately feeling about the death. The sharing of our stories, the narrative process, is a complex process. As Gelder and Jacobs suggest in another context, “a secret necessarily unfolds in a...framework [that] always carries with it a level of publicity.... secrecy is always a matter of demonstration or performance [such that] secrecy and publicity...relate to each other...enjoy each other's company”, but are “intensely wary of each other” (Gelder and Jacobs 1998: 25).

Donna Haraway argues that there is ‘no way out of stories’. In her analysis of the world of technoscience, Haraway designates the figure of the ‘modest witness’,

³² Cruickshank (1998) takes up the importance of stories in a culture built on an oral tradition in her research with people of the Yukon territory, in the Canadian north.

whose 'subjectivity is his objectivity', as an example of a storyteller so accomplished and self-effacing, that his stories become foundational, superseding any other narratives:

His narratives have a magical power – they lose all trace of their history as stories, as products of partisan projects, as contestable representations, or as constructed documents in their potent capacity to define the facts. The narratives become clear mirrors, fully magical mirrors, without once appealing to the transcendental or the magical (Haraway 1997: 24).

Haraway's point is to critique such a master's narrative and collapse the belief that such stories are 'the facts'; rather, stories are products, contestable, and complex. Paul Broks (2003), a clinical neuropsychologist who explores the relationship between brain and self, and thus the complex interactions between biological and psycho-social landscapes, similarly notes that the self is itself a story, a select narrative of actions, events, memories, and feelings that varies depending on who is telling whose tale.

Hollan argues there is an over-emphasis on demonstrating how the self is culturally-bound, particularly in western theories and concepts of the self. Consequently, cultural discourses and conceptions are rendered overly salient and inadequate attention is given to comparing individual accounts of subjective experience (Hollan, 1992: 283-86). The sustained attention to cultural readings may occlude the psychic

dimensions/geographies of how individuals place the self through story. In her study of three generations of Norwegian women and their paths to adulthood, Nielsen (2003) demonstrates the complexities of the emotional subject by seeking to understand both cultural patterns and personal psychology in her interviewees' accounts. Nielsen interviews three groups of related women (daughters, mothers, and grandmothers) characterizing their perspectives on youth through three different lenses, respectively cultural studies, psychology, and sociology.³³ Aside from these generational categories, the daughter-mother-grandmother sets are sometimes bound by what Nielsen calls an 'emotional tone' such that there is an emotional continuity between any one family (Nielsen, 2003: 9). This, as she points out, suggests that cultural patterns correspond to the generational level and the emotional patterns to the individual level. However, she acknowledges this is simplistic and extends her argument to suggest that cultural patterns can be attached to families and psychological emotional patterns can be generational. She explores this further by interrogating the housewife as historical fact, cultural construction, and emotional reality. This particular subject position resonates for the 'mother' group of her study who see themselves as daughters of such women and as such, find a strong 'emotional charge' in this paradigmatic figure. Nielsen argues that this and other examples demonstrate "complex relations between a structural change in women's lives, a cultural change of norms for femininity, and a specific pattern of inner mother-me relations of many girls of this generation" (Nielsen, 2003: 13).

³³ In Nielsen's study, these three disciplinary perspectives are employed to reflect three differing historical contexts. Nielsen finds her daughters, mothers, and grandmothers most usefully explained through the insights of cultural studies, psychology and sociology respectively.

Avis suggests her (self) conscious presentation of a researcher self in a research conversation is composed of her “dancing” between several different positions:

It is as if I am able to bear witness to *myself*, the *me*, that is taking part in the conversation, while also appreciating that the conversation is strategic and directed toward the stuff of my research. There is a greater sense of complexity in the subject positions that I occupy than I initially thought there would, should, or ever could be. I am in a sort of movement, maybe a dance, that involves oscillating between immersion and observation and many other places that lie between or to the side of the supposed binary (Avis 2002: 206).

The multiple positions held by a storyteller challenge a spatial constitution of identities wherein the self is “inside” and able to be a detached observer of the “outside”. Such delineations are increasingly challenged as thinking about mobile subject positions is extended. For example, Davidson (2000) troubles the idea of boundaries between inner and outer spaces in examining the experiences of agoraphobia. Her research suggests that a sense of self is mutually constituted with the immediate environment of that individual. This does not mean boundaries do not exist, but calls into question the manner and character of their existence. In her ethnographic research examining individual “delusional geographies”, Parr (1999b) has collected “partial stories” in an effort to explore the “disruptive mesh” between conscious and unconscious spaces.

Attending to subjectivity acknowledges that “we make sense of our selves and our worlds through a whole range of complex and often non-rational ways of understanding” (G. Rose 2001: 103). As Rose explains: “We feel, we dream, we fantasize, we take pleasure and are repulsed, we can be ambivalent and contradictory, panic-stricken and in love; and we can react to things in ways that feel beyond words” (G. Rose 2001: 103). Our social and spatial encounters are mutually constituted by our feelings about selves and worlds, and furthermore, these feelings can be unresolved, unknown, unsettling, or unspoken: “A biography of longing. It steers us like magnetism, a spirit torque. This is how one becomes undone by a smell, a word, a place, the photo of a mountain of shoes” (Michaels 1996: 17). This meshing of the spaces of our encounters, the familiarity, or indeed strangeness of social discourses, and our emotional ontologies ensure a continuous reiteration of subjectivity, a becoming that is undone only to be reassembled. Considering the multiple ways in which we narrate the self is one means of considering how emotional subjects take shape.

3.3.2 Managing the interpersonal encounter

The nature and politics of framing research encounters through the taking up of a psychoanalytic project has been done in various ways³⁴ (see Bondi 1999b for a sample list of such interventions) and remains a matter for critical inquiry. A psychoanalytic critique highlights the significance of the unconscious (the unknowing subject, versus the knowing subject of the rational self) and

³⁴ Or rather, there are various ways to take up a psychoanalytic project. Aside from a traditional Freudian interpretation, contemporary work tends to follow either object relations theory (e.g. Winnicott and Chodorow), or Lacanian theory.

'disintegrates' (dis-integrates) the notions of rationality on which the knowing self is predicated. Pile proposes this critique can be useful to the project of human geography in various ways. In particular, he argues that a psychoanalytic positioning "re-composes the relationship between the person, social action and social structure" (Pile 1993: 136).

Feminist geographers have drawn both from Lacanian and object relation versions of psychoanalysis to examine the interview encounter: a specific example of the relationships that Pile refers to above. Both Rose (1997) and Bondi (2003a) make use of psychoanalytic theory to delve into the interview encounter. Working within a Lacanian framework and thus attending to the significance of language³⁵, Gillian Rose (1997) examines the implications of silences in her interviews with community arts workers in Edinburgh.³⁶ Rose observes that silences occur in the workers' language as they refuse to translate for Rose in two circumstances. The first of these concerns the perceived achievements of the community arts projects. The projects are presented by the workers as achievements in and of themselves. The meaning of the product is not sought, or rather, Rose argues, not "decoded" for the interviewer:

The products were never represented, never described as artefacts awaiting interpretation for community arts workers. Instead, they were always placed in the context of performances, both in their making and in their audiencing. These products were understood as

³⁵ According to Pile, language in the Lacanian sense refers to "exchanges—of all kinds—in general" (1993: 136). Pile argues that a (Lacanian) psychoanalytic perspective brings an emphasis to the analysis of language (particularly spatial language), which then "allow[s] geographers to [...] deconstruct the hegemonic ideas through which we understand our world(s)" (1993: 136).

³⁶ Also see G. Rose's (2001) discussion of psychoanalysis in the analysis of visual culture.

moments of 'communication', not as representation, and could not therefore be described in the context of an interview (G. Rose 1997: 193).

The second area of silence Rose describe in her interviews paradoxically involves her interviewees' references to voice, for example, using the phrases 'giving voice' or 'encouraging voice'³⁷. The silence Rose identifies is in the lack of description as to what such a voice, if received or encouraged, would say.³⁸ "Instead," Rose argues, "participants' voices are evoked as a mode of communication which resists the power-ridden process of description, including those of community arts workers" (G. Rose 1997: 194). The subversion is in the refusal to interpret while still making use of (dominant) discursive forms. The paradoxical result is that the communication is a refusal to communicate.

Methodologically then, Rose's reading of the spaces of interviews shows the (im)possibility of reading what is unarticulated during these exchanges. Many feminist interpretations of women's words have examined the notion of silence in the context of women's lack of speech, or rather, the lack of words available to women. For example, Audre Lorde (1984) writes about unexpressed anger, Makeda Silvera's (1983) collection of the oral histories of Caribbean domestic workers in Canada provides a forum for previously unheard women, Dale Spender (1980) analyses the gendered use of language, and Helene Cixous' (1975) insists on the importance of

³⁷ This language, or rather call to language, used by the project workers, mirrors the feminist desire to make space for women's words discussed earlier in the paper.

³⁸ This interest in voice resonates with a tradition of feminist writing on women's speech wherein women are imagined (not) speaking without words, or rather having no words to speak their selves.

l'écriture féminine. These various explorations draw from a shared sense that 'othered' subjectivities cannot be articulated within a dominant discourse.

Similarly, Rose speculates that the silences of her interviewees, "something in their voices beyond signification" (G. Rose 1997: 184) might be beyond the discourse of the interview. Illuminating their (non) existence in the post-interview, analytical process exposes the discursive boundaries of the interview and highlights the excess to that discourse. Rose suggests that such absences and silences in the research interview may constitute a radical critique and that researchers must expand their methods beyond a simple 'coding and categorizing' in order to bring forth these radical politics (G. Rose 1997: 202). In this interpretation, silence is potentially speech withheld; as such, the resulting space of silence remains an unperformed potential, a "potential trauma which can rupture or destabilize ... any representation" (de Lauretis 1987: 3).

Drawing from an object relations³⁹ psychoanalytic framework, Liz Bondi (2003a) emphasizes the relational nature of interviews in her examination of the processes of empathy and identification. Bondi proposes that these processes are elements in an oscillation, as an interviewer moves between positions of absorption to ones of observation. Bondi argues that this oscillation is necessary for the creation of a 'psychic' space which allows the similarities and differences of the interviewer and interviewee to be realised.⁴⁰ Her intent is to encourage researchers to make use of

³⁹ Nancy Chodorow (1978) offered the most well-known feminist account of object relations theory in which she emphasizes the role of mothering.

⁴⁰ The production of psychic spaces resonates with the Foucauldian account of power relations as creative.

these ideas to reflect on their research relationships – not to employ psychoanalytic work as a ‘distinctive fieldwork practice’ (Bondi 2003a: 74).

Bondi, who elsewhere has discussed her own experience of psychotherapeutic encounters (Bondi 1999b), suggests that much of the communication in an interview takes place unconsciously (Bondi 2003a: 70). This is both similar and different to Rose’s interpretation of silences, above. Like Bondi, Rose argues that not all interview communication is ‘voiced’; however, Rose argues that the unvoiced communication is unperformed, and awaiting performance. That is, Rose suggests what is outside of discourse is awaiting performance, awaiting recognition of a more representative discourse. Bondi proposes a different interpretation, one that accords the unconscious communication as a performed encounter in its own right. In this use of an object relations psychoanalytic approach, subject positions are understood as always relational, and always both knowing and unknowing. Furthermore, subject positions are understood to be bound up with the spaces of their (en)actions – the tension of differentiating between researcher and researched is not dissolved, but more deeply, or coherently detailed.

3.3.3 The ethics of emotional research

There is not psychoanalysis or anthropology apart from this interpersonal encounter, an encounter that draws unavoidably on the investigator’s powers of empathy as well as observation (Chodorow 1999: 134).

As Chodorow suggests above, the interpersonal encounter is foundational for investigations into human life. She identifies psychoanalysis and anthropology as similar in their dependence on intersubjective exchanges in order to explore their respective concerns with psychic and social life. The similarity, Chodorow continues, is in the process of understanding: "the ethnographer and treating analyst respectively try to understand and elicit the native's point of view or the analysand's unconscious thoughts, wishes, feelings, and inner world" (1999: 134). Bondi and Fewell make a related comparison, suggesting that debates about power and positionality in fieldwork within social and cultural geography have links to similar debates in discussion of counselling (Bondi and Fewell 2003b). This parallel set of debates is encapsulated in the particular salience of boundaries within each of these realms.

A significant difference between the psychotherapeutic and the ethnographic encounter is that the analyst or counsellor is sought out by the analysand or client and the explicit purpose of the encounter is to attend to the psychical needs of the latter. By contrast, the ethnographic subject is sought out by the ethnographer, even if only by virtue of the ethnographer placing herself or himself in a community. Chodorow argues that in the process of analysis, both situations become "accounts given in one relationship (that of the respective professional communities) of interactions and accounts developed in another (the ethnographic or analytic encounter)" (Chodorow 1999: 134). But Bondi (2003b) insists that the differing practices of making meaning must be considered. Within a psychotherapeutic encounter, the account generated occurs in the space of the encounter and is one that both the client and practitioner

hold to be deeply private (the practitioner is professionally bound to do so). The meaning-making that arises from the use of psychoanalytic ideas in geography, Bondi argues, occurs outside the space of the interpersonal encounter. Instead, within the social-scientific framing, the interpersonal encounter is taken up as an entity which exceeds the moment of its production and becomes subject to disciplinary and theoretical interpretations. This is not to say that interviewees are passive in this process, (as the earlier discussion about power indicated). Hollan cites the work of Levy and Wellenkamp (1989), who suggest interviewees are both informants and respondents in a process of communication about emotions. They will offer their personal interpretations of their feelings and in their discourse, movements, expressions, hesitations and so on also provide an object for the interviewer's observation (Hollan 1992: 288).

Another distinct difference between psychotherapy and ethnography signals other concerns. Those in psychological practice are extensively trained (if in a variety of methods) to manage the emotional contours of an interpersonal exchange. The social scientist is not (although exceptions exist, as Bondi (1999b) exemplifies). Are there ethical guidelines for social scientists who invite research participants to speak about the emotional aspects of their lives? Are social scientists qualified to enter into exchanges about intensely personal and emotional territory? Formal ethical practice manuals do exist for social scientists. In this research, in lieu of any formal ethical guidelines offered by the university of Edinburgh⁴¹, I consulted the British Sociological Association (BSA). The BSA offers a Statement of Ethical Practice

⁴¹ Geography at the University of Edinburgh has since established formal ethics procedures.

(2002) in which the relationship between researcher and research participant and the responsibilities therein are expressly considered. For example, the Statement includes the following:

Sociologists have a responsibility to ensure that the physical, social, and psychological well-being of research participants is not adversely affected by the research. They should strive to protect the rights of those they study, their interests, sensitivities and privacy, while recognising the difficulty of balancing potentially conflicting interests (The British Sociological Association 2002).

They further recommend: "Special care should be taken where research participants are particularly vulnerable by virtue of factors such as age, disability, their physical or mental health" (The British Sociological Association 2002). Feminist researchers have actively pursued an 'ethics of care' (Gilligan 1982; Vivat 2002) and much of the above discussion about power and gender in research seeks to address this very issue of ethical practice. However, the issue of whether special qualifications are required in order to take 'special care' around potential mental health considerations is a matter for debate.

I gave my considered and respectful attention to the ethics and emotions within interpersonal encounters. In practical terms, I organised my interview script to emphasise to interviewees that they could withdraw from the interview, choose to not answer a question, or stop the tape at any point. I offered the provision of transcripts

and of a research summary on request. Given the nature of my project and my use of questions that directly inquired about the respondents' emotional well-being, I sometimes encountered people's emotions in a very direct, face-to-face way. In terms of taking emotional care with my research techniques, I variously drew on respect, patience, silence, empathy, and humour when appropriate. I elaborate further on this below in my discussion of interviews.

I also addressed the intersection of ethics and emotions in my project by engaging in a serious and sustained engagement with my own emotional well-being.⁴² I have endeavoured to practice and improve upon my participation in empathic exchange. This challenging process has included acknowledging my own limitations (as a researcher-person), and understanding that such limits paradoxically create space for me to recognize and learn from the interpersonal skills of others. I conclude here by reflecting that researching emotions may indeed be enriched by the honing of interpersonal skills such that psychotherapeutic or counselling training might bring.

3.4 Research Design

3.4.1 Developing the research project

As I described in Chapter One, my original research direction evolved from an interest in women's mental health organizations to an interest in women's mental health, broadly and non-clinically described as emotional well-being. From here, I

⁴² During the past year, I have taken up counselling services for reasons unrelated to my research; however, in the manner of the multiple spaces of life overlapping, this process has contributed to shaping my engagements with my thesis material.

developed a specific research question: how do women in Shetland define, manage, and maintain their emotional well-being? This question is set within a wider agenda of contributing to understandings of the spatialities of gender and emotion, through the production of a feminist emotional geography. I am interested in how such a study can make explicit the interplay of psychic, social, and spatial distances and proximities.

In order to examine women's experiences of emotional well-being in Shetland, I have adopted feminist ethnographic approaches, relying primarily on semi-structured interviews and participant observation. Despite, or perhaps because of, the potential hazards and inevitable complications, interviews remain a rich method for obtaining information. Interviews offer opportunities for gaining in-depth insights from research participants, as well as from or about researchers and the process of research. Ethnographic approaches such as participant observation have a similar potential for learning; complement interview material by potentially clarifying or productively contradicting interview data; and importantly, have been deemed as particularly suitable for research that engages with mental health issues (Parr, 2001). In keeping with ethnographic practice, I produced detailed fieldnotes in the "thick description" style advocated by Geertz (1973), and I endeavoured to write "lushly" throughout the recording process (Goffman quoted in Emerson et al. 1995: 69).

To put these techniques into practice, I organised two blocks of fieldwork. Several factors influenced my decision to have two fieldwork periods. At the most basic level, I had to consider financial constraints and the time limited Ph.D. process. My

funding allowed me to make two return trips to Shetland. In a three year program of study, four months was a reasonable amount of time to devote to fieldwork. Also, I reasoned that a second fieldwork period would give me the opportunity to act on any reflections or experiences gained during the first fieldwork period. This reasoning acknowledges the situated and cumulative nature of learning. Indeed, the second block of six weeks offered a second approach to Shetland, differently structured by the very fact of my return as a familiar (to some) presence, and by my previous experience of Shetland life.

I designed the first fieldwork block of nine weeks to get an initial sense of my field site and of potential participants. I intentionally waited until the last two weeks of this fieldwork period before conducting any formal interviews. The second block of time was deliberately planned to take place during winter months. This scheduling offered a point of comparison to the first fieldwork block which took place in summer, and was also timed to ensure my attendance at the annual Up-helly-aa festival (an event of significance in Shetland culture which I discuss further in Chapter Four).

3.4.2 Interviews

Given the distance between myself and my field-site, I decided to make contact with some potential interviewees before making the journey north. It was partly a residual trace of my original research plan, and partly the pragmatic fact that I had access to a set of contacts in counselling roles in Shetland (through my participation in a research project on geographies of counselling in the UK), that I began my

investigation by speaking to women and one man who work for organisations that attend to mental health and welfare. Beginning with these people, I informed them by phone I was doing research into women's well-being in rural/remote communities. I said I was interested in their personal and professional senses of well-being. In terms of the latter, I indicated my interest in how their services contributed to providing and maintaining emotional well-being and how women in the community accessed their services. I also indicated my interest in the rural/remote location and its potential affects on emotional well-being. I asked for and received suggestions for additional contacts. Many of these phone calls were lengthy conversations and I learned much before I arrived in Shetland. As I told people I had not yet been to Shetland, I was offered various descriptions and kindly forewarnings of what I could expect. I noted after one such conversation:

Linda said that she felt that geographical areas threw up different problems for people and that people (outside rural communities) didn't always realize this. She said that remote areas change how you live (Fieldnotes: January 21, 2001).

While I was making phonecalls from Edinburgh to seemingly separate people, I quickly realized that those on the other end were connected in a multitude of ways, through work, personal, or community contact. While I can guarantee confidentiality, it is impossible to ensure anonymity as many of these initial contacts know one another and cross-referred each other to me. Before my arrival in Shetland, I sent

these potential participants a letter (Appendix A) and a flyer (Appendix B) to explain the general aims of the research.

After my arrival in Shetland, I met with most of the previously contacted people informally, prior to the interview, so that I could further discuss my research and solicit their informed participation. These pre-interview meetings were unrecorded and deliberately relaxed, tending to occur in informal public settings such as cafes; however, the ensuing conversations were important in the development and refinement of my eventual interview schedule (Appendix D).

From my initial points of contact and as a consequence of my time in Shetland, my investigation broadened to include women without formal connections to organisational means of achieving emotional well-being. I met these women through a variety of social channels, sometimes by introduction, and sometimes just by chance. For example, in the case of Jane, Deirdre, and Pauline, who participated in an interview as a group, I had arranged originally to interview Jane. When I met with her informally to discuss this in a local cafe, Deirdre happened to come by and join us. As she was interested in my project, Jane invited her to attend the interview as well. When I arrived for the interview, the following week, Jane had arranged for a third friend, Pauline, to come around as well. I also interviewed Susan and Ursula together after hearing about they had co-facilitated a women's group on one of Shetland's Northern Isles.

In the first period of fieldwork, I conducted ten interviews with eleven women and one man. In the second block of fieldwork, I conducted ten interviews with eleven women. The interviewees range in age from thirty-seven to sixty-four years of age (at time of interviews in 2002-2003). The average age of the respondents is forty-six years of age. Eight of the twenty-three respondents were born in Shetland. Of the ten incomers who completed the demographic questionnaire (Appendix F), three have been in Shetland more than twenty-five years, two more than fifteen years, two more than ten years and the remaining three respondents have resided in Shetland for three years or less. Of the five people who did not complete the questionnaire, two were long-term residents (of at least twenty years), and three had been in Shetland between three and five years. In sum, the majority of the incomers interviewed have been in Shetland most of their adult lives. All the incomers identified as their nationality as either Scottish or British, and their ethnicity as Anglophone European (i.e. 'white'). (For further demographic details of individual respondents, please see Appendix J, and for individual profiles please see Appendix I).

All the interviewees' names are altered and some place names too.⁴³ I have also given the one male respondent a female pseudonym in an effort to protect confidentiality. Although I intended to interview women, the one male interviewee holds a key position in terms of counselling provision in Shetland, a service mostly taken up by women. As such, he has useful, relevant insights to offer about women's

⁴³ I do not anonymise the following place names: Lerwick, Mainland, the Northern Isles and the Outer Isles. In the case of Lerwick, there is little point in anonymising it. As the largest centre by far and home to nearly half of Shetland's residents, it is too difficult to disguise and the population is sufficient to provide some anonymity. Mainland, as the largest Shetland Isle (and where Lerwick is located) is not anonymised on similar lines. I did not conduct any interviews on the Outer Isles, but I did in the Northern Isles: comprising Yell, Unst and Fetlar. As these populations are very small, I refer to 'a Northern Isle' instead of identifying each particular island by name.

emotional well-being in Shetland. The question I had to consider was this: is it incidental or fundamental that he is a 'he'? Knowing what we do of employment statistics, the gender of authority positions (who tend to be male), and the gender of counsellors (who tend to be female), there is almost certainly an aspect of the fundamental in this case. As a 'he', he is readily identifiable; as a 'she', 'she' is one of several people who counsel or offer counsel in a variety of ways in Shetland. The very ease of this gender reassignment reveals something of the arbitrary nature of how we mark gender. I do not wish to replicate the subsuming of gender that has occurred in social science research more generally, as if gender were of no importance. Rather, I expose my disguise (without exposing him) for the express purpose of acknowledging the politics of gender that underlie this decision.

My interview schedule went through several permutations reflecting the shifting nature of my research focus (see Appendix C for an early brainstorming of potential questions). Eventually, I settled on ten questions (Appendix D). These questions developed in part in the process of my own evolving ideas, but were also heavily shaped by the several informal pre-interview meetings, and innumerable unplanned conversations I held with people in Shetland during my first fieldwork block, but before I commenced any interviews. While these questions served as a guide during the interviews, the interviews were only semi-structured and I endeavoured to encourage people to tell the stories they thought best illustrated their feelings about emotional well-being. In practice, the interviews (most of which were approximately one hour in length) tended to centre around the first two questions: "What does emotional well-being mean to you?" and "How do you attend to your emotional

well-being?” The remainder of the questions served as prompts in the event that people found the first two questions difficult to answer and/or if they had very brief answers. Most people did not meet either of these two potential circumstances. In the case of those employed in (broadly speaking) mental health organisations, I indicated I was interested in both their personal and professional perspectives on emotional well-being. In all cases, as per my research flyer (Appendix B), I indicated my interest in the following themes: stories or experiences of emotional well-being, strategies for maintaining it, and these experiences in the context of Shetland. I encouraged people to use stories to illustrate their points, for example by saying “Is there a story from your life you would be willing to share that would illustrate your definition/experience/strategy of emotional well-being?”

3.4.3 Participant observation and fieldnotes

Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw argue that “first-hand relations with those studied may provide clues to understanding the more subtle, implicit underlying assumptions that are often not readily accessible through observation or interview methods alone” (1995: 3). As a temporary member of the community, I participated in local activities, for example joining swimming activities⁴⁴ and a yoga class, attending musical events, and making regular visits to local shops in order to participate in and observe community practices. During my second fieldwork period, I attended an annual social event of some significance, the Up-helly-aa festival, which I discuss in more detail in Chapter Four. In all these situations, I endeavoured to be attentive to some basic details: Who was there? Why and how did the event/situation/interaction

⁴⁴ Shetland’s numerous swimming pools (a legacy of oil wealth) are well known.

interest people? What did people get out of it? Where were we? When was this situation taking place? In addition to these basic 'reporter's questions', I was also attentive to dynamics of gender (numbers of women to men; gendered division of activities including conversation) and to nuances of behaviour (including observing responses, noting patterns that seemed regular and taking note of behaviour that seemed unusual in a particular context). As an outsider, I was often offered (and received gratefully) interpretations of social phenomena, advice, or direction. As a consequence of this participant observation, I gained insights into and context for the data I collected via the interviews. I recorded these insights (and my questions too) by taking extensive fieldnotes throughout my research. In the main, these fieldnotes were taken while I was in Shetland; however, I also wrote fieldnotes leading up to and following each fieldwork period. These points of entry and exit were times of striking contrast between life in Shetland and Edinburgh and sometimes the simple element of contrast highlighted aspects of Shetland life I would have otherwise missed.

Fieldnote data can clarify or productively contradict other types of data collected in a project. I found Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995) offered a useful guide for taking fieldnotes. They focus exclusively on fieldnotes in ethnographic encounters, and examine in detail, the where, why and how of writing notes in the field (Emerson et al. 1995). The authors draw examples from their own ethnographic practice, including research into domestic violence and with ex-mental patients in a US setting, as well as fieldwork in Zaire. This ethical and political grounding for their guide to fieldnotes offered a comfortable fit with this research on women's emotional well-being. For example, they recommend that instead of "viewing reactivity as a

defect to be carefully controlled or eliminated in entirety, the ethnographer needs to become sensitive to and perceptive to how she is seen and treated by others" (Emerson et al. 1995: 3-4).

Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw argue that the insights of fieldnotes are a necessary complement to other ethnographic methods of data collection and enhance the ability of the researcher to conduct his or her research. Their theoretical framework "draw[s] upon an interactionist, interpretive understanding of ethnography that derives from the traditions of symbolic interaction and ethnomethodology" (Emerson et al. 1995: xii). Building on these traditions, Emerson et al. advocate recording detailed accounts of interaction and encourage ongoing documentation to reflect the processual development in understanding that takes place thereby facilitating "see[ing] beyond fixed, static entities, to grasp the active "doing" of social life" (1995: 14). They offer a four-step method:

- 1) take note of initial impressions
- 2) focus on 'key events or incidents'
- 3) note what others are noticing or signalling to be important (i.e. step outside of personal reaction)
- 4) look for different interpretations of the same event, variations to an established pattern (Emerson et al. 1995: 27)

These offer a useful guide designed to attune the writer to the nuances of events. However, I did not follow their recommendations to the letter. The authors make a thought-provoking recommendation to avoid 'intimates' until the fieldnotes are completed for the day, as they otherwise feel that the fieldnotes will be robbed of "psychological immediacy and emotional release" resulting in a "stale recounting" (Emerson et al. 1995: 41). I suggest that following this agenda means that subsequent conversations with intimates become the 'stale' versions and also eliminates the possibility of clarifying your observations in a dialogic exchange: an oral form of psychological immediacy. In the end, I felt my fieldnotes offered a valuable resource and they did not seem to suffer as a consequence of my decision to sometimes share my thoughts and feelings before writing them down.

In particular, fieldnotes allowed me a space to reflect on how the research was progressing outside of the more formal interview encounters. Thus I could see how the meetings outside of the interview were, at times, the most fruitful. For example, I first met one of my respondents, Judy, over coffee – an encounter that lasted about two hours. As first meetings tend to be, this was a conversation that went in every direction: I explained about my research, Judy talked about her work, and we learned bits and pieces about each other's life. The last time I saw her, it was to join Judy and her closest friend for dinner in Judy's home. I arrived early as requested, so I could meet her self-described 'better half' before he went to work, and I left late, after a sometimes raucous, sometimes reflective evening drinking wine and sharing confidences with Judy and her friend. I recorded my impressions of these encounters in my fieldnotes.

In between these two interactions, I tape-recorded an interview with Judy, an encounter that lasted about an hour. During this hour I asked Judy to share her stories about emotional well-being. After the interview, I wrote in my fieldnotes:

Following this interview, as I reached out to turn off the tape, Judy violently expelled her breath, collapsing in her chair then laughing loudly. This dramatic explosion of activity jolted me into an awareness of just how much energy and concentration were involved in her narration during the interview. We had a brief (unrecorded) conversation about her reaction, and, still laughing, Judy expressed her feeling that you never knew if you were coming out with the right thing, if you could say what you were about to, or if it would be ok to leave something out. Relaxed in her chair, she was clearly relieved that the need for such calculations had passed (Fieldnotes: July 25, 2002).

This non-interview data collected through participant observation adds to the interview data to create a fuller, more nuanced account of my encounters with Judy. This is an important point to remember as interview transcripts are often valorised as providing information that is more authentic than a researcher's observations.

Any notion that an interview provides authentic research proof is quickly dispensed with during the transcription process.⁴⁵ Following the interactive energy of an interview, and in view of any previous or subsequent encounters, the researcher or transcriber must somehow translate that dynamic performance of which s/he may have been a part, while still preserving the integrity of the event. The multiple processes of transcription encompass not only the physical task of writing down the spoken word, but also extend to the circumstances that surround that act of writing. Ultimately, transcription has its roots in an interview conversation⁴⁶ and as such relies on a discerning ear, engaged participation, and a memory for the nuances of narrative expression. The researcher is also contributing to the energy of an interview through words, body language, and (unconscious) reactions to the other person. Additionally, the researcher will often have been the impetus for the interview to take place.

It is important to remember that the vivisection of a transcript is as vulnerable to the vagaries of interpretation as any other moment of participating and observing. While interviews offer a rich source of information, a concentration on transcripts alone ignores the wealth of other cues and clues at our disposal. In simultaneously privileging the performing, then the recounting of the interview interaction over any

⁴⁵ Unfortunately, the standard research practice of handing over interview tapes to secretaries and graduate students means that many established researchers miss the raw contradictions of creating a transcript: the heavy, regular striking of keys x'ing out the particular flavour, the character of a moment in time; the complications of isolating words from utterances, from interactions, in isolation from the space of the interview, and certainly from any surrounding encounters. In one of academia's many invisible economies, transcripts are the product of a transaction wherein usually senior researchers hire people with lower economic status for low(er than the researchers') wages. Typically of work passed along in this fashion, the transcription of recorded interviews is noted for its tedium and excessive time consumption. These politics or rather economics of transcription ensure that in the moment an interview becomes text it is already one step removed from the original encounter.

⁴⁶ DeVault (1990) describes research with people as an activity that is generally rooted in talk.

other in the research process, and by reducing their participation in that recounting, researchers stand to lose the richness of a layered, ethnographic research account.

3.4.4 Network maps

In the first round of interviews conducted in 2002, I employed the use of a diagrammatic exercise designed to map geographic and affective networks (Appendix G). The method was derived from the London-based work of Sandra Wallman (Wallman 1984). Wallman's study was about household management and one of her points of focus was to ask her respondents: 'Who and where are the important people in your network? How when, why are they important?' (1984: 47). In her study, Wallman is particularly interested in the role of the 'resource-keeper' – a position which can be held by different people in the home. To answer her research questions, Wallman developed two 'network maps', respectively "designed to record the geographic and affective distance of kin and non-kin in the resource universe of the household" (Wallman 1984: 49). Although Wallman comments that networks are not useful in rural areas, and more accurately reflect the complexity of life in the urban setting (1984: 59), I argue this reveals a common misperception that life is more simple in the non-urban environment. Massey's (1997) evocative description of the stretched out social relations in her local community are London-based, yet the non-urban experience also generates such relations as the flow of people, ideas, products and relations continue to circulate. I felt that a version of Wallman's maps could be of use in Shetland.

Wallman's geographic map was designed to determine how invested or involved a household is in its local area by plotting household contacts, and the affective map measured the value placed on these various household contacts. In her design, the household unit forms the centre of each circular map and the outer circles are divided into kin and non-kin segments, with a third segment for contacts who generate feelings of hostility or ambiguity. Wallman's maps are adapted from a family therapy model, the logic of which is to make relationships visible and so to facilitate a starting place for constructive problem-solving.

Wallman notes some of the flaws in the maps: if a participant only marks a few people on the map, is that because there are only a few people in their lives or is it because only a few people are 'useful' (1984: 65)? Another limit is the conceptual assignment of the household to the centre, so that only relationships directly linked to that unit can be mapped. This eliminates relationships that may be one step away from the household, even though the central household may know of and be affected by these relations. Despite this difficulties, Wallman argues the data from the maps demonstrate "that even if kinship solidarities are displaced or replaced by bureaucratic support systems in the city, as many models of urbanism and urbanization propose, the new resources are not necessarily any less 'personal' than the old" (1984: 68).

Building on Wallman's network maps, I designed two diagrams to map networks of emotional support, the first via geographic positions and the second via affective significance of contact (Appendix G). The purpose of the maps was to generate data

which could reveal potential links between and information about affective closeness and geographic proximity. The first diagram asks the user to record whether contacts are family or non-family, the primary mode of communication with the contact (in person, telephone, email/electronic communication, post or other), and the location of the contact (beginning from self at the center and moving through household, local area, Shetland, United Kingdom and finishing with overseas). The second diagram again asks the user to record whether contacts are family or non-family, but then codes for the affective value of the association (primarily positive, primarily negative, neither positive nor negative, both positive and negative), and for significance of contact (critical, important and minor). Together, the information gathered from each diagram potentially offers a social-spatial picture of emotional networks.

I asked interviewees to fill out the maps in their own time, as opposed to working through the diagrams with them for two reasons: I wished to offer them the personal space to complete the exercise and I didn't want to take up too much of their time as they were already giving up time for the interview. Unfortunately, in practice, these maps proved to be unwieldy and too complicated to use easily. One respondent who partially completed the maps suggested making the exercise a computer program which would allow users to quickly and easily fill in the details. Faced with a low response rate and as the creation of such a computer program was outside the time frame and budget of this project, I abandoned the use of the maps in the second set of interviews.

3.4.5 Demographic questionnaire

Each interviewee was given a research questionnaire to complete, along with a stamped and addressed envelope for return (Appendix F). The questionnaire was designed to collect basic demographic information, such as age, relationship status, nationality, and sexual orientation. The data has been collated into a table (Appendix J). In the second round of interviewees, I added a section to the demographic questionnaire in which people could list the people they felt themselves to be closest to, indicating importance, relationship and location. I added this because although I abandoned the mapping exercise, I was still interested in the spatial aspects of people's affective networks. This had a much higher response rate than the affective maps (65% as opposed to 20%) probably because it asked for less details (and consequently provided less information).

3.4.6 Consent & Naming

I followed the recommendations of the British Sociological Association's Statement of Ethical Practice in determining my consent procedure and also in offering to provide participants with a summary of the research. I asked all interviewees for their consent to tape record the interview and to use the interview material for research purposes. I did not ask individuals to sign a written statement of consent. Instead, I choose to address the issue verbally prior to taping, and then asked each person on tape if they consented. I also noted their responses on an information sheet along with their contact details for my records (Appendix E). I also asked people if they would like a copy of their interview and if they would like a summary of the research

findings. Additionally, I asked if they wished to be named in the research (all respondents declined and I provided each of them with a pseudonym). I reminded people at the start of each interview that they had the right to withdraw from the interview and/or to turn off the tape at any point. In this research, I changed all personal names and deliberately disguised or altered some details in order to provide some measure of confidentiality for my participants. For example, I replaced the names of individual islands with an 'X'.

3.4.7 Language

All the interviews were conducted in English but occasional Shetland words appear in the transcripts, and so in the thesis. The distinctive Shetland dialect combines Norse, Lowland Scots and English. I made extensive use of John Graham's excellent reference texts: *The Shetland Dictionary* (1999) and *Grammar and Usage of the Shetland Dialect* (1991) in order to transcribe interviews as accurately as possible. Shetland dialect words that appear in subsequent chapters are marked with an asterisk and English equivalents can be found in a glossary at the end of the thesis.⁴⁷ When appropriate, excerpts from transcripts and fieldnotes have been edited for sense and ease of reading.

⁴⁷ A note about reproducing a textual version of the Shetland dialect:

Use of the apostrophe to indicate a letter or letters omitted, should be reduced to a minimum, and confined mainly to indicate where a letter has been omitted from the normal SHETLAND usage – not the English. After all it is the Shetland speech which is being used. The present participle in Shetland ends in –in, which makes the final apostrophe in words such as gyaan', rinnin', buskin', rather pointless. The Shetland conjunction being *an*, not *and*, should make it unnecessary to write *an'* (Robertson and Graham 1991: 46, emphasis in the original).

3.5 Data analysis

The excitement and energy of fieldwork is necessarily followed by the tedious but necessary production period (typing up fieldnotes, transcribing interviews). The next step is to devise a method for working with the accumulated data. After canvassing colleagues and reflecting on my previous experimentation with computer-generated methods for analysis, I choose to code without benefit of a computer program. In the process described below, I developed a coding framework by working first with the interview transcripts and later applying this framework to the fieldnotes. I was again guided by the suggestions of Emerson et al. (1995), adapting their procedure for coding fieldnotes to my combined purpose of coding fieldnotes and interview transcripts.

My first step was to read the entire corpus of information collected and to fill in any missing details. This allowed me to re-familiarize myself with the data. I then went through the transcripts using line-by-line categorization. In this process, Emerson et al. suggest, the transcripts "become textual objects (although linked to personal memories and intuitions) to be considered and examined with a series of analytic and presentational possibilities in mind" (Emerson et al. 1995: 143). The minute concentration of performing this 'open coding' on each line creates a temporary distance from the overarching stories told but also directs attention to otherwise missed details and facilitates openness to developing an infinite variety of themes. From here, a more selective process enables the development of a coding framework which identifies patterns and themes. I identified ten thematic clusters: emotional well-being, Shetland, safety, gender politics, stories of self, speaking/living

relationally, spatial issues, socio-economic issues/changes, mental health politics/issues, and interview relations. Once this level of coding was achieved, I moved to focused coding: the application of these themes to the transcripts. I coded the transcripts and the fieldnotes according to these ten themes, using a different colour for each theme. I recorded any insights or new ideas that arose as I went through this process. I also asked questions of the data: what are people doing?; how do they talk about, understand what's going on?; what comes up?; what assumptions are made (by them, by me)?, what have I learned from the notes? (see Emerson et al. 1995: 146).

Emerson et al. suggest that such questions get at processes rather than looking for causes or motives. This type of coding differs fundamentally from quantitative coding, whereby data is collected in categories, for example with answers to the same questions grouped together. Instead, in this qualitative coding, "the ethnographer is indeed interested in categories, but less as a way to sort data than as a way to name, distinguish, and identify the conceptual import and significance of particular observations" (Emerson et al. 1995: 151). The final step of this coding process was to extend each of the ten clusters with a number of more specific observations, resulting in a detailed coding framework (Appendix H).

I departed from Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995) when it came to the subject of emotions during the coding process. The authors note that an "emotional distance [is] required to subject to analysis those with whom they have become deeply involved and in many cases care about. For some, analysis comes close to an act of betrayal"

(Emerson et al. 1995: 145). Rather than position emotional involvement and analysis as mutually exclusive, I follow Bondi (2003a) who, in her work on empathy and identification in research interviews, suggests that such involvement requires acknowledgment and management as opposed to attempting to remove this aspect from research work.

After coding the interviews and fieldnotes by breaking them down into themes and patterns, I reconsidered the data in the light of the stories I had asked for and my respondents had shared with me. This allowed me to identify predominant types of stories which included stories about relationships, both to other people (particularly partners and mothers) and to places. An aspect of these stories that I did not explicitly attend to in coding was the development of some stories across the two phases of the fieldwork. While I organised my transcripts and fieldnotes into Interviews I & II and Fieldnotes I & II, I ultimately worked with and presented the data as a whole set. This seemed to happen in a natural fashion, partly because I intentionally attended to narratives, and the narratives took shape over the course of both fieldwork blocks. In retrospect, the seeming inevitability of creating whole narratives could have been explored as another element of both methodological and analytical decision-making. The character of my two fieldwork periods was very different, both in how I conducted myself in Shetland (more comfortably and confidently) and in how I was received (also more comfortably and in some cases, more intimately as the consequence of developed friendships). This is an issue I will return to in the conclusion of this thesis.

3.6 The ongoing field

Last interview I did with Jo. We meet at the door, we kiss in greeting. We are new friends, newly intimate with our personal sharing. She has made a special effort to come over to see me before I leave (in twenty-four hours) and to be an interviewee. I am very conscious that we are under the auspices of friendship now and it feels slightly false to shift into interview mode. I am conscious that I am performing my professional role, but as her new friend, wish to impress her with my ability to do so. She agrees to all the ethics questions: yes, yes, yes... she is impatient and laughing, perhaps to demonstrate she trusts me and so doesn't need to consider these matters. But, she is careful in the interview conversation, and does at one point indicate that she doesn't want something personal noted in the record. Then the interview is over -- she wants to see a photo of my new partner and we are back to fledgling friends again (Fieldnotes: March 12, 2003).

The above excerpt from my fieldnotes captures the moment I ceased performing explicit research activities in Shetland. With the last of the interviews finished, I was on my way back to Edinburgh. However, as the notes suggest, the line between my research role and my other potential positions was already permeable. This already mobile positioning has led to my ongoing sense that I have never left the field; or rather, I am always reminded that the network of relations I became a part of when I began this research continues to stretch in all directions. I still receive and respond to emails and phone calls from interviewees which are personal and unrelated to the

outcomes of this Ph.D. research (though this, of course, is also personal). This remains a source of productive tension for me as I write about my encounters with these people while being regularly reminded of their embodied and emotional selves. Part of the complication of this ongoing field is that the terrain is constantly changing and peoples' lives move on, even as I try to suspend their movements with my descriptions and analyses. A closed door on the fieldwork would give a falsely finite feel to the data collected. My continued connection to an ongoing field provides an explicit reminder to me of how partial and limited my representations are.

3.7 Conclusion: Why methodology matters

“In a world in which power is understood to be radically dissimulated (as much about negotiating subjectivity or negotiating household chores, or work relations, or claiming and refusing rights), the feminist research imperative becomes one of being sensitive to the relations and proximities that matter, either in their determining force or their transforming potential” (Jacobs and Nash 2003: 275).

Methodological dilemmas within feminist geographies are representative of a fundamental tension within feminist work: the relations between researcher and researched. In the interview encounter, this tension may manifest in a dissonance between the experiences of a research encounter and the representation and/or politicization of that encounter. This already complex situation is layered still further when the emotional aspect is made explicit.

As a consequence of my methodological choices, I experienced tension, pleasure, moments of belonging, of withdrawal, and of being strange (this last always a particularly visceral sensation). Interviews provided me with rich material, but in the moment (and sometimes in the reliving), these exchanges could be awkward or uncomfortable, and at times for unfathomable (to me) reasons. Interviews place individuals face to face with difference and because of this, they are both useful and difficult. My interpretation of the interviews in this project was productively complicated by my surrounding recorded experiences as a participant observer. With at least one participant, information informally shared with me and later recorded in my fieldnotes, was explicitly not shared during the formal interview process. While it is a relatively simple matter to make an ethical choice not to include such withheld details, it is another matter to 'unknow' what is known in the more implicit processes of interpretation. Interviews about emotional well-being also led not only to discussions of emotion, but also expressions of emotion within the spaces of the interviews. I was present for tears, anger, and sometimes highly personal revelations.

The skein of research relations that stretch across my study of gender, geography, and emotion, the accompanying stories, and the relationships they detail, form a kind of cat's cradle, weaving together people and spaces, a feminist researcher and research participants, and the presence and absence of the effects of power in research encounters. The interview site is an illustrative example of such 'relations and proximities'. The insights of psychoanalytic theory help to recast the contours of this paradigmatic feminist research method. The shift in feminist politics beyond a

search for a common, Womanly identity and towards a more radical inquiry of identity itself has productively unsettled the way feminist researchers think about methodological practice, opening up debates about power dynamics, subjection and intersubjective encounters.

Identifying research participants and the attendant dilemmas of that process of inescapable subjectification matter because such stories, individual or collective, are an inescapable condition of our lives. As researchers, we are routinely engaged in storytelling. While there is 'no way out of stories', Haraway argues that "[c]hanging the stories, in both material and semiotic senses, is a modest intervention worth making" (1997: 45). Attempting to trace such processes of providing, naming, resisting, maintaining, and feeling in (feminist) spaces of interviews reveals the necessity of continually asking questions of our methodological decisions and practice. Bondi argues: "These questions are revisited again and again because particular contexts, and particular people matter: they are questions that can never be answered but that help to ensure the vitality of research practices" (Bondi 2003a: 66). These tensions of our work should continue to figure in our writing, not to engage in a process of elimination, but to encourage the ongoing creative and respectful production of research spaces. By troubling⁴⁸ methodological practice we can think differently about how we understand and frame the subjects engaged in our research. As such, methodological practice is opened up for revision.

⁴⁸ In opening line of her preface to the influential *Gender Trouble*, Butler writes: "Contemporary feminist debates over the meanings of gender lead time and again to a certain sense of trouble, as if the indeterminacy of gender might eventually culminate in the failure of feminism" (1990: ix). But she goes on to add: "Perhaps trouble need not carry such a negative valence" (1990: ix). Instead, to trouble is to make sense of, and this is how I employ it here.

Shetland's Geographies of Gender

4.1 Introduction

The chapter presents empirical evidence of Shetland's geographies of gender by first considering ways in which Shetland is 'placed' and then by considering the ways in which gender is operationalised within Shetland. This material functions to provide fresh support for a basic tenet of feminist geography: that place and gender are dynamic, inextricable, and mutually constitutive processes and that these processes are integral to the production of subjectivities.

The chapter begins by introducing Shetland's social and spatial distances and proximities. I consider how Shetland is 'placed' at multiple intersecting scales, in relationship to individual, community, and global contexts of meaning. After

considering these interrelated versions of Shetland, I turn to more explicit accounts of Shetland's geographies of gender. I consider the effects of a masculinist imaginary of 'the north' and detail women's responses to this contemporary gender ideology. I finish with a close reading of Up-helly-aa, an annual Shetland event which offers an example of how gender and place come together in the making (and so always also the unmaking) of certain identities. In compiling the evidence of this chapter, I draw from the experiences of a diverse group of Shetlander and incomer women⁴⁹ (as shared with me during one-to-one interviews), fieldwork observations and conversations, academic accounts, and public reports such as newspaper articles and council publications. The resulting picture of Shetland sets the social, cultural, and geographical context for the following substantive chapters.

4.2 Placing Shetland

Shetland is composed of more than one hundred islands, roughly fifteen⁵⁰ of which are inhabited by approximately twenty-thousand people. Nearly half of the population resides in the Mainland town of Lerwick (Figure 3). As such, Lerwick is the centre of commerce and cultural activity in relationship to Shetland's other island communities, housing, for example, Shetland College, of the University of the Highlands and Islands. Scalloway, also on Mainland, is Shetland's second largest community with a population of over one-thousand people, providing the setting for

⁴⁹ All but one of my interview respondents were women. As explained in Chapter Three, I present all respondents as women in this thesis.

⁵⁰ In the course of my fieldwork, I spent time on six of the islands: I resided on Mainland and visited Yell, Unst, Fetlar, Bressay and Fair Isle.

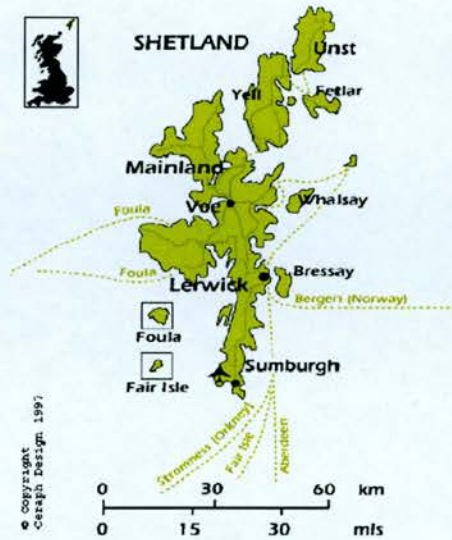


Figure 3: Map of Shetland⁵¹

the North Atlantic Fisheries College. Yell, Unst and Fetlar are collectively referred to as the Northern Isles and still more distant isles are described as the Outer Isles. In particular, the relationship between the Northern Isles and Lerwick is analogous to that of Shetland to 'da sooth' (mainland Britain). That is, there is a certain resistance to the sometimes necessary travel to Lerwick and, familiar resentments (to anyone who has lived in a Northern place) regarding the perceived withholding of services by centralizing them in the South.

⁵¹ Maps of Scotland usually show Shetland in an inset. I like this map because it places mainland Britain in the box instead.

These refined place-based distinctions within Shetland belie the reality of Shetland's remote location. Shetland as a whole is situated some seventy miles off the north coast of Scotland in the North Sea. Shetland is closer to Bergen, Norway than to Edinburgh, and nearly one thousand miles north of London. The great distances, small population, a severe landscape, and the ever present wind contribute to a rugged mystique often mythologised in Northern cultures (Lehtinen 2003).

4.2.1 The Significance of Place in Shetland



Figure 4: The dramatic coastline

Shetland is virtually treeless and the resulting aesthetic of dramatic rocky cliffs, sweeping vistas, and oceanic skies appeals to both locals and visitors alike. Shetlander, Beth, remarks: "For mesel*, I get a lot oot* of livin here 'cause of the environment...There's plenty o* sky and sea and nothin else in between and it just gives you a sense, freedom, it's always given me dat*" (Beth 2003). Such is the

topography of Shetland, carved out with deep voes (inlets), that it appears to be all edges. The shape of the land, the 'nothin else in between', sits in sharp relief against the weight of water that presses in on all sides. A wide open landscape can contribute to a feeling of freedom as Beth describes, and as Yi-Fu Tuan also notes in his well-known study of place and space (Tuan 1977).⁵²

This sense of place, then, is more than a simple pleasure in natural beauty. Inhabitants of the Shetland Isle of Whalsay exhibit "a pervasive sense of rootedness, of belonging, as if people were as immovably and inherently part of the island as the very features of its landscape" (Cohen 1987: 3). Similarly, islanders interviewed on Harris in the Western Isles do not consider themselves owners of their land, rather they describe belonging to the land (Mackenzie 2001).⁵³ In Canadian research with First Nations people in the relatively isolated area of Northern Ontario, "the land is not just seen as shaping or influencing identity, but being an actual part of it" (Wilson 2003: 88). In each of these examples, remote geographies heighten the sense of an intermingled project of self and place.

The perception of Shetland as 'out of the way' offers one example of how attributes of place become part of self meaning. For example, Liz, who relocated from England with her family commented: "we moved to Shetland because, cause we were living busy and complicated and fairly stressful lives [in the south]" (Liz 2003). By

⁵² In *Space and Place*, Tuan proposes that we find security in our attachments to particular places and a complementary sense of freedom in our desire for open space.

⁵³ While the relationship between identity and place is strongly felt in both the Western Isles and in Shetland, I do not wish to suggest these two island groups are identical. One great difference is in their respective cultural influences: the Western Isles are loyal to Gaelic history and traditions and Shetland is drawn to its Norse heritage.

implication, Shetland is perceived as offering an opportunity to live in less busy, less complicated, and less stressful ways. In a similar vein, Beth, a Shetlander who has lived in London and in the Middle East comments on her sense that Shetland facilitates a more personal and comfortable way to live:

[Y]ou think that your childhood and where you're brought up doesn't matter but to me anyway* it makes a strong impact, in, being brought up in Shetland and I mean there's a lot here that I really like because you can see what you know* all your life and know* all your connections and um, when I tried living in London for a period* while and it's just too anonymous it's too big it's too impersonal (Beth 2003).

Both Liz and Beth demonstrate the perception that Shetland offers a quiet respite from a busy world. Importantly, they also exemplify how sense of place intermingles with sense of self. This intermingling suggests that the significance of place in the sparsely populated Scottish highlands and islands cannot be underestimated. But, the rootedness people feel, as Cohen describes above, is not simply or inherently achieved by virtue of the remote location. Rather, I would argue Shetlanders are deeply immersed in the task of continually establishing their unique cultural narrative of place through a variety of means.

Shetland residents are well aware of Shetland history and culture, not least because structures such as the Iron Age brochs are highly visible on the stark landscape, but also because there are ongoing excavations taking place. During my fieldwork, I was

asked regularly if I was a student at one of Shetland's many archaeological sites.⁵⁴ As other scholars have noted (see Jack 2003), there is a proliferation of scholarly and popular literature about Shetland, particularly historical accounts, all readily consumed by Shetland residents. In my fieldnotes, I recorded this exchange:

X has just rung me back. She asked if I knew a chap called Tony Cohen... yes, said I. Whalsay is her island. She said his book was quite sensitive. That he had managed to write about the island without offending anyone. Quite an achievement, to be sure. She also asked if I knew of Goffman, and his writing. I said yes (Fieldnotes: January 30, 2003).

The familiarity demonstrated by the woman above with both anthropologist, Cohen (and his study on the Shetland isle of Whalsay) and sociologist, Goffman (who analyzed interpersonal relations based on his Shetland fieldwork) is not unusual. Locally penned histories are similarly well-known in Shetland. The weekly newspaper, *The Shetland Times*, is full of references to local history as well as current news, and is itself quickly sold out on a Friday morning.

Shetland's Viking heritage is celebrated in various ways, most visibly with the annual Up-helly-aa celebrations (Brown 1998), a custom I will return to in more detail below. In the summer of 2002, a poster displayed prominently at the market

⁵⁴ Shetland is home to several Iron Age brochs (stone forts) dating from 100 years BC. During the period of my fieldwork (2002-3), the most extensive excavation work was taking place at Old Scatness in southern Mainland under the direction of archaeologist Val Turner. The Old Scatness site has summer visitor facilities for viewing excavation work and demonstrations and a number of students from outside Shetland are involved in the project.

cross on the high street of Lerwick defiantly proclaimed Shetland's 'true' Norse heritage. The isles became part of Scotland only in the fifteenth century when given as a wedding present from Danish to British royalty.⁵⁵ Emphasizing this relatively 'recent' relationship with Scotland and so prioritising very specific Northern aspects of Shetland history marks Shetland's effort to remain distinct and autonomous from 'da sooth'.⁵⁶ Historian, Jack (2003) and others have argued that the celebration of Viking heritage and the corresponding rise in Shetland nationalist feeling can be traced to more contemporary events than the fifteenth century union. For example, Jack refers to the start-up of the *New Shetlander* journal in the 1950s in the depressed economy of the post-war period as "a conscious attempt to re-invigorate the Shetland sense of 'identity' and 'community'" (2003: 210). This journal maintains this tradition today, seeking contributions with a 'Shetland flavour' and highlighting, for example, dialect poetry (Smith and Johnson 2002). Drawing on council reports and documents from the 1960s, Jack demonstrates an increasing desire for an independent Shetland and shows how this movement took inspiration from the Faroese success at maintaining autonomy from Denmark (2003: 10). In the 1970s, the Shetland nationalist project gathered force as the consequences of oil developments seemed to threaten the Shetland lifestyle (Jack 2003: 10).

⁵⁵ To secure his daughter Margaret's marriage to James III of Scotland, King Christian I of Denmark and Norway pledged his lands of Orkney and Shetland in place of the full amount of the promised dowry. When he was unable to produce the funds, the isles remained in Scottish possession. Although, as recently as 2004 in conversation with a Danish guest at the hostel, I was told with a grin that Shetland was still Danish. For further details, see the following website: <http://www.royal.gov.uk/output/Page130.asp> (accessed February 29, 2004). It is interesting to note Shetland's place within this gendered economy of exchange: effectively as a bride-price.

⁵⁶ The term 'sooth' is often employed, i.e. people will say they are going 'sooth', have guests 'fae sooth' (from south) or refer to 'soothmothers' (incomers from the south). South, in the Shetland context, is located anywhere south of Shetland.

Shetland takes pride in its unique character and any sense of allegiance to Scotland is minimal. This was firmly demonstrated when Scottish devolution was the issue at the polls in 1979. While much of the rest of Scotland was in favour of a Scottish parliament, Shetlanders were overwhelmingly against: a stark statement of political distance from mainland Scotland (Cohen 1987: 89; Jack 2003). The recent transfer of (some) power from Westminster to Edinburgh, following successful Scottish devolution in 1999, is not perceived by Shetlanders as a significant change. London and Edinburgh are experienced as equally distant from and equally southern to Shetland. Like other communities at a geographical distance from governmental power and decision-making, Shetlanders chafe at the removed authority of the Scottish central belt, and Edinburgh in particular. Current headlines reveal the extent to which external political and economic forces continue to affect Shetland fishing and oil, and Shetland responses continue to stringently delineate Shetland's boundaries. For example, recent fishing bans and political lobbying over whitefish stocks have resulted in Shetland standing in opposition to both the European Commission and the British parliament at Westminster (Shetland Times, 2002).

4.2.2 Looking into the distance

As described in the introduction to this thesis, Shetland has an ongoing relationship with distance. A look into the case of the inter-island ferries demonstrates the spatial complexity. Residents of the Northern Isles make extensive use of this form of transport, and not simply for their essential travel needs. Goods (such as groceries) and services (healthcare or legal assistance, for example) are also ferried across. To

make any crossing, existing schedules must be considered and, of course, the North Sea weather has an important role to play. In addition, there are complex politics attached to ferry use. These politics can range from corporate decisions about the provision of ferry service to more personal, if no less volatile, confrontations of a domestic nature. In terms of the former, the transfer of business from P&O ferries to Northlink in 2003 caused a great political stir as issues of the *Shetland Times* in late 2002 and into 2003 will attest. A significant element of this debate was the anxiety that local needs would not be met by a new company. Several skits devoted to ferries in the 2003 Up-helly-aa performances highlight the contested nature of these politics.

Personal politics are similarly interwoven with the seemingly mundane task of using the ferry. In terms of the potential for the personal consequences of a ferry crossing, I recorded the following after a church coffee morning:

As we sip our tea and eat triangular sandwiches with no crusts, I hear about a very public love affair – between a politician’s wife and a prominent [civil] employee, also married. All four live on [X] and most recent part of the story is as follows: the two women are both on the [X] ferry in their respective cars. The wife of the philanderer gets out of her car, walks over to the other woman’s car, and knocks on her window. The politician’s wife unrolls her window whereupon the first woman ‘thumps’ her. People applaud (I suspect this detail may have been for dramatic effect) and the woman calmly walks back to her car,

gets in, and drives off the ferry which has now conveniently arrived in port (Fieldnotes: April 30, 2004).



Figure 5: Waiting for the ferry

The ferry users are bound together by their reliance on the service and their community membership. This shared community space (a temporary meeting place) is one way in which their island community is self-defined. The dramatic encounter described above reveals the participants' designation of the ferry as an appropriate place to (re)establish community norms. The reenactment itself, performed with great relish over tea, functions to reasserts the 'feeling rules' of the community. Arlie Hochschild suggests we can recognize feeling rules "by inspecting how we assess our feelings, how other people assess our emotional display, and by sanctions issuing from ourselves and from them" (Hochschild 2003: 57). The applause of the ferry audience, whether or actual or invented, signals the assessment and approval of the display. This incident is more than a single act in a very personal drama, it is an example of how Shetland's various distances are traversed and negotiated.



Figure 6: On the edge in Shetland?

Despite the great distances from Shetland's shores to anywhere else, Shetland residents will scornfully dismiss the idea that Shetland lacks sophistication. Linda, a lifelong resident of Shetland, expresses a commonly held view:

It's one of the things that I find strange about bein on mainland Britain is people sayin to me 'how on earth do you manage to live in Shetland?' and I say back ta them 'how on earth do you manage to live here? In the middle of a city?' I don't think there's ever really been a feeling of remoteness about Shetland, not that I can recall hearin my, say my mother and my grandmother talking about because... it's always been a cosmopolitan place Shetland (Linda 2002).

Linda's claim for a cosmopolitan Shetland is not without substance. Shetlanders are renowned for their collective passion for exploring the world and many people can tell family stories of great journeys taken, whether to New York or New Zealand. Catriona corroborates this: "Folks very much value their selves as being a very well-traveled community, through fishing [and] whaling" (Catriona 2002). Both Linda

and Catriona allude to the longevity of this travelling predilection, Linda by evoking the testimony of grandparents, and Catriona by referring to the whaling, a now defunct occupation. Catriona, an incomer of some ten years, continues:

I mean you can go just about anywhere and come across a Shetlander... Which considering the population of the place is bizarre.... We took off on holiday one year, went to Florida, got off the plane and found people from the same island as us, way over in Florida. Hey, it's one of these coincidences but, you seem to find them around the place (Catriona 2002).

The historical movement of Shetlanders around the globe has led to the contemporary feeling that the Shetland community extends far beyond its geographical borders. Furthermore, the act of travelling has become part of what it means to be 'Shetland'. Aileen, a Shetlander, believes that going away from Shetland contributes to an increased sense of contentment when home again:

I think it's important that people get the opportunity to go away from Shetland as well, unless you've been away you can't feel this, you feel you should have done this ... [laughs]. I feel I did a lot of my travelling and did a lot of things that I was interested in doing before, before I came back, so now I'm, y'know I'm quite happy working away here (Aileen 2003).

In this context, Shetland's distance from other places is experienced not as a barrier but as an advantage. Shetland's travellers promote Shetland around the world, extend community networks, and, in bringing home a wealth of experience, continue to deepen Shetland's cosmopolitan flavour.

The management of these many distances is an everyday affair in Shetland with individual, community and global consequences. From the outside, it is easy to characterize Shetland's *distances from* in terms of a rural idyll far away from urban concerns, but a closer look at the variety and far-reaching connections and relations that Shetland manages on a daily basis reveals a greater social and cultural complexity.

4.3 Shetland's Geographies of Gender

4.3.1 Shetland's gender imaginary

On a sunny summer afternoon, I walked across Mainland with a group of women including Shetlanders and incomers. As we walked a long distance over the otherwise empty landscape, someone proposed it was as if we were women left on our own by our whaling husbands. Bit by bit, we added embellishments to this fantasy: we were carrying our knitting to sell in the toon* perhaps, or on our way to attend a birth, or maybe carrying peat. We might have the croft to manage and children to care for, but with our men away we were free to do as we pleased. This picture amused us all. Our fun in this game was imagining ourselves as these intrepid women striding across the isles. The ease and detail with which we could do so

reflect the prevalence of such images of Shetland women which are available to the collective imagination.

This vision of the hardy Shetland woman is part of the far north mythology that characterizes Shetland's imagined geographies. It is a highly gendered mythology.⁵⁷ In the main, the Shetland economy has been sustained by predominantly male industries, historically whaling, crofting,⁵⁸ and more recently North Sea oil and fishing. Within this masculinist economy, hard men, hard drinking, and general imperviousness to the elements are highly valued, reflecting as well as constituting a particular intersection of gender and place which has been noted in other rural and remote communities (for related versions see Gibson 1991; Woodward 1998). Shetland women have been no less mythologized. An important facet of the retelling of Shetland history is the detail that when the strenuous work of whaling and fishing took men away from the Isles, the women were left behind to carry on. After meeting with Nancy, an incomer of many years, I noted how she compared the abilities of her Shetland mother-in-law with her Scottish mother:

Nancy used her mother-in-law as an example of [...] the hardy crofter woman. She apparently did all the work when her husband had to go out to work. As she told this story of her mother-in-law I felt a sense of familiarity – it's the same story that [historian] Claire Jack

⁵⁷ The underlying masculine nature of the European nation itself is a key element of this discourse: "the masculine discourse locates itself in the rationalist discourse of modernity from which the notions of nationhood spring....this discourse is entrapped in European intellectual traditions" (Fiske 1996: 79). While it is outside the aims of this thesis, there is a considerable literature that explores gender and nation, including Nina Yuval-Davis' (Yuval-Davis 1997) eponymous book.

⁵⁸ But see Jack's (2003) history of women who croft.

identifies and then determines is not an accurate portrayal of what really happened. It's the story that everyone knows and repeats. Nancy talked about the difference between her own mother and her mother-in-law. She said her own mother got food from the shop, not the garden or the sea. She said her own mother came up to Shetland but it wasn't a place she could ever stay (Fieldnotes: June 19, 2002).

By implied contrast to her mother who needs a shop for her groceries and who couldn't survive in Shetland, Nancy's mother-in-law belongs to that legendary group of women who are immortalized in Shetland's collective memory.

Images of Shetland women in the 19th century, whether from popular literature, histories, or memory, converge on the overburdened but stoic heroine: the Shetland woman "as [a] symbol of her homeland's unique beauty, tragedy and harsh reality" (Abrams 2000: 108). The contemporary sense that Shetland women are as rugged as their environment⁵⁹ is a persistent if inaccurate theme according to Shetland historians:

Visitors to the islands and Shetlanders themselves have constructed a powerful image or discourse on women which places them continuously at the very heart of Shetland society and culture and which counters many of the assumptions about modern

⁵⁹ Of course, there is a persistent theme of equating women with landscape as various scholarship has documented. See for example, Anne McClintock's first chapter, "The Lay of the Land: Genealogies of Imperialism" in her excellent book: *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (McClintock 1995).

gender relations, notably the sexual division of labour and separate spheres ideology (Abrams 2000: 100).

The contemporary imagining of an egalitarian Shetland is facilitated by the emphasis on an even older Viking past. Viking women were historically in a more powerful position than their Scottish counterparts, for example, in terms of land rights (Crawford et al. 2002; Jack 2003)⁶⁰. From this mix of history and myth, a perception of Shetland women who transcend gender roles has arisen.

When contemporary sexual inequality is acknowledged, it is presented as the consequence of incomer attitudes, not Shetland culture (Abrams 2000). However, despite a desire to underlay contemporary Shetland with a bedrock of equality, Jack argues that the discourse of 'hardy' women is recent and Shetland women of the nineteenth and early twentieth century were assigned to gender roles similar to the rest of the British Isles (Jack 2003: 208-20). Abrams (2002) notes that a closer look at oral histories of women's place in Shetland society and economy reveals differences from the sentimental sketches found in popular, historical and literary accounts. In these oral accounts, "[s]elf-representation is firmly grounded in the realities of everyday life and shaped by recollections of relative hardship" (Abrams 2000: 110).⁶¹ Thus, Shetland can be seen as typical of western societies of the

⁶⁰ Crawford's edited collection of essays offer a kaleidoscope view of the Shetland document of 1299, which records the accusations of one Ragnhild Simonsdatter of Papa Stour against an official called Thorvald Thoresson regarding land claims. Ragnhild's ability to make her claims in the public arena offers an intriguing glimpse of such relations in 1399. In particular, see Ingvild Øye's essay in this volume: Ragnhild Simonsdatter and Women's Social and Economic Position in Norse Society.

⁶¹ The qualitative difference in content from these different modes of transmission suggests a strong argument for the use of ethnographic techniques to gain insight and information from subjects of interest who are unlikely to have penned historical accounts.

nineteenth, twentieth and now twenty-first centuries: patriarchal, in the classic feminist sense⁶² (see Millet 1970). Within such a patriarchal framework, economic, social, and legal structures facilitate the domination of men over women.

The “realities of everyday life” within a broadly patriarchal culture continue to highlight issues of gender inequality. Andrea, an incomer of nearly a decade, offers her gender assessment of present-day Shetland society:

Shetland is still a very male-dominated society. It's becoming a bit a bit more equal now, generations are changing, but I think generally Shetland as with any sort of rural area is a little bit, not behind but yeah, behind in what's going on in y'know big active places with lots of population, modern societies. There's a lot of sexism, there's a lot of the wife stays at home and makes the tea and looks after the kids and, y'know she might be able to be allowed to have a part-time job and stuff like that, but that still exists in the older generations, and the men go out to work (Andrea 2003).

For Andrea, Shetland's “male-dominated society” is anachronistic. In her analysis this ‘backwards’ behaviour is directly related to a small population and rural locale. She identifies these outmoded gender patterns as being particularly prevalent in the older generations. Rather than seeing previous generations of Shetland women as more liberated, Andrea sees that they are less so. The more typical historical

⁶² Patriarchy in the classical feminist sense is a western concept, as various scholars have noted (i.e. Mohanty 1991), so I would argue I am using it accurately to describe a western culture.

reworking of larger-than-life heroines could be read as one way of escaping the continuing gender inequality, in imagination, if not in reality.

4.3.2 Performing gender in Shetland.

Up-helly-aa, a spectacular winter festival, provides an intriguing study of the links between gender, place, and identity in Shetland. Up-helly-aa is a fire festival in the genre of the "Grand Spectacular"⁶³ (Lyle 1998) with roots in the fifteenth century. Like other fire festivals, the traditional objective is to encourage the return of the sun in the inky darkness of a northern winter. Up-helly-aa's performance of Viking heritage offers an exaggerated display of the masculinist Shetland attributes discussed above: northern robustness, Norse roots, and a dominant masculinity. This present-day 'tradition'⁶⁴ operates successfully to reiterate Shetland's identity through performances of gender and place. As a space of masculinity,⁶⁵ Up-helly-aa affords insights into how engagements with particular ideas of places can result in specifically gendered experiences of such spaces.

⁶³ Lyle differentiates between three layers of calendar customs in the Scottish context: The Grand Spectacular, The Village Pump, and The Deep Well. The 'Grand Spectacular' is the event that is formally planned and draws large and direct participation by the public as either viewers or participants. Importantly, the Grand Spectacular is also the layer of event that is the most embedded within contemporary practice, with the other two layers representing activities more deeply present in memories.

⁶⁴ Despite its historical longevity, some argue that Up-helly-aa is a very modern tradition, in the sense that "tradition is only tradition if it has resonance in the present day, and that resonance changes as people find new things from the past, new myths by which they can derive feelings of belonging and identity" (Brown 1998: ix).

⁶⁵ Critical and feminist geography have increasingly attended to spaces of masculinities (see Berg and Longhurst 2003: for a bibliography of this work). For example in a discussion of the construction of soldiers' masculine identities in the countryside, Woodward argues that the army constitutes the countryside in particular ways, in the sense that they assume control over the space, and that this contributes to a "particular (hegemonic) notions of masculinity" (Woodward 1998: 277).

The Up-helly-aa event has three visibly significant elements.⁶⁶ The first involves a procession in which singing and shouting squads of men in Viking dress, as well as in fancy dress, carry flaming torches through the cold, dark January night. Spectators line the streets while the men, known as guizers*, led by their leader, the Guizer Jarl*, parade through Lerwick's central streets. The second significant element is when the guizers employ their torches to set alight a Viking ship especially constructed for this purpose. The resulting blaze is nothing less than spectacular. Following this, the crowds retire to halls all over town to await the third component of the evening: the prepared performance of each squad. The performances range from rehearsed songs, dramatizations of community politics through tongue-in-cheek skits, and/or dance numbers intended to entertain and amuse. After each performance the band strikes up and the men choose women from the audience to dance with before they move on to their next venue. The squads take most of the night to tour the various halls.

As an annual reiteration of non-Britishness, Up-helly-aa offers Shetlanders a ritual for shoring up their unique identity in relationship to a particular social, cultural, historical, and geographical place. Up-helly-aa also reinforces particular types of status. In Lerwick's Up-helly-aa,⁶⁷ the masquerade and games are for men only. The guizers may come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, and may be costumed in varying degrees of luxury, but it is only men who don costumes,

⁶⁶ Arguably, Up-helly-aa consists of more than the events in January. Participants prepare many months in advance, rehearsing song and dance numbers and preparing costumes.

⁶⁷ The Lerwick Up-helly-aa is undoubtedly the most well-attended and the most publicized; however, other Up-helly-aa's take place around Shetland and women do participate in some of these processions.

process, set fires, perform, and tour the halls.⁶⁸ This performance functions to reflect Shetland's selectively distinctive Northern character, and with swords, shields and full Viking beards grown especially for the occasion, this character is clearly masculine.

Women do have distinct roles in the ritual and they are not any less performative for being off the main stage. Women staff the halls, providing food and drink, as well as making up an audience of potential dance partners. This relegation of women to what might be termed a 'domestic' space has a long historical precedent as well as contemporary corollaries. Experiences of and access to public and private spaces are determined by gender, as research into the geographies of women's fear, for example, has empirically demonstrated (Day, 1999; Mehta and Bondi, 1999; McDowell, 1999; Spain, 1992). Gibson's (1991) analysis of women's role as 'hewers of cake and drawers of tea' in the coal mining communities of Central Queensland describes a similarly regimented gendered division of spaces of labour.

Lewis and Pile's (1996) analysis of the performative politics of the Rio Carnival offers a useful point of comparison, as a means to examine the ways in which Up-helly-aa provides a stage for a reiteration of a particular Shetland identity.⁶⁹ While Up-helly-aa and the Rio Carnival take place in two vastly different geographical locations, they each embody a spectacular performativity of gender, place and identity. In their assessment of the Rio Carnival, Lewis and Pile draw on Butler's

⁶⁸ In the case of the Guizer Jarl and his squad, they will also spend a lot of money on costumes and associated costs.

⁶⁹ In making this comparison, I utilize a technique advocated by researchers Emerson et al. who argue that "by comparing [an] event with 'like' others, one can begin to identify more general analytic dimensions or categories" (Emerson et al. 1995: 149).

(1990) theory of performativity. Butler's influential notion refers to "not just a singular act but a reiteration of a norm or set of norms that have assumed this status through their repetition" (Nash 2000). In the case of the Rio Carnival, Lewis and Pile argue that the mostly female performers "do not merely convey cultural norms through their bodies, but are actively performing and masquerading femininity" (Lewis and Pile 1996: 24). Similarly, the participants of Up-helly-aa, parading as Viking warriors appear to be the epitome of all that is hirsute and warlike, reiterating a hyper-masculinity. Importantly, as Butler's concept of performativity emphasizes, the moment of performance is not in itself the performative event; rather, it is the reiteration of recognizable social rules that is important. Thus, in each case, the paraders are "actively producing and regulating 'practices of gender coherence'" (Lewis and Pile 1996: 38). To paraphrase Lewis and Pile, the acts are not expression of gender, but reflect how gender is understood and exceeded (Lewis and Pile, 1996: 38). Up-helly-aa performers re-present an historical version of Shetland masculinity, thus both placing and gendering Shetland identity.

Moving away from two standard interpretations of carnival,⁷⁰ as either subverting or positively reinforcing social rules, Lewis and Pile propose that carnival may function as a "site of the hybridity, interdependence and ambivalence: it is a moment of openness to otherness, a moment of the subversion of regimes of meaning and power" (Lewis and Pile 1996: 26). While authority legitimates certain space by using and abusing borders, or by controlling movement within and/or across different types

⁷⁰ Interpretations of carnival fit into two familiar accounts, which Lewis and Pile outline: (1) carnival as the inversion of social norms and so the suspension of established hierarchies (following Bakhtin), and (2) carnival as the reinforcement of social values, "telling people precisely what is not permitted under normal circumstances" (Lewis and Pile 1996: 24) (following Eagleton).

of boundaries, Pile (Pile 1997: 3) argues that geographies of resistance "occupy, deploy and create alternative spatialities" to pre-existing oppressive and exploitative arrangements.

Up-helly-aa, in its celebration of Viking masculinity seems to be a clear-cut case of the reinforcement of gender norms. However, some subversive behaviour can be discerned in the 'other' costumes, as my fieldnotes record:

We arrive just in time to see the torches lit. Suddenly the street is ablaze – a flickering, but bright dance of light, and underneath, stalwart men shielding their faces against the fierce weather. But wait... men? There are plenty of Vikings, but as they begin to process past, I get a closer look: 'Indians', Rastafarians, cowboys, elephants, bunnies, fiddlers, grim reapers, and then a squad of Dolly Partons, fairies in tutus, school girls with giant breasts -- the unlikely gender-bending of Up-helly-aa! (Fieldnotes: January 29, 2003).

Although the lead performers of the Up-helly-aa procession are fiercely masculine in their warrior garb, a number of the squads are in fancy dress, and of these, many are cross-dressed. This fetish for female garb has been an enduring feature of the Up-helly-aa costume choices (Brown 1998). It could be argued that these cross-gender costumes are taken up as a subversive act, an opportunity for men to escape the normative masculine expectations of participation in Up-helly-aa. Indeed, in conversations with men who did not participate in Up-helly-aa, they spoke of the

difficulty in finding a place in the ritual because of these normative expectations. However, in his study of Up-helly-aa, Brown comments on the practice of cross-dressing:

The representation of women by male guizers has been a perennial theme....Women were usually represented as young, pretty or (as in the case of suffragettes) troublesome, but rarely as economically active; when they were, it was usually as hand-knitters which fitted well with the prevailing discourse on women's place in the domestic sphere. However it is well not to overlook the obvious; as one Up-helly-aa enthusiast says: 'I dinna ken what it is aboot men; they just enjoy dressing up as women' (Brown 1998: 183-4).

Whether the pleasure and humour in dressing up 'as women' results from men's sexual proclivities, a spirit of fun, both or neither, there are two interesting aspects of this activity. First, it is the power of masculine status that affords the guizers the ability to 'bend' their gender on such a public stage. The 'joke' in dressing like women for Up-helly-aa is found precisely in the reality that the guizers are emphatically not women. In the ability to assume the 'skin' of 'others', the hyper-masculine subjectivity celebrated in Up-helly-aa is reiterated and intensified. Secondly, the possibility of donning female 'costumes' (false breasts offer one clear example), or as Lewis and Pile aptly describe it, "body-as-costume", demonstrates the inherent performativity of gender. Gender is revealed as a set of practices, including the assumption of certain visible markers.

The “practice of gender coherence” is felt in different ways. For Helen, a Shetlander from the Northern Isles, Up-helly-aa is another confirmation of living within not just a masculinist but misogynist world. Helen comments: “I think there’s a huge degree of sort of misogyny and it’s a very macho culture... Yeah, Shetland culture is hugely macho: Up-helly-aa, Vikings, [these] celebrate that aspect of male culture” [laughs] (Helen 2002). Helga, a Shetland shopkeeper, and a previous participant in a rural Up-helly-aa event, offers a different perspective. In conversation with Helga, I raised the question of women’s participation in Up-helly-aa:

Helga was shy, but eager to talk at the same time. She paused lengthily between her periods of speech. I sat on my hands, metaphorically speaking, to keep from interrupting her. She has gone to Up-helly-aa in the past and it is her feeling that the country ones are better than in Lerwick. The Scalloway version has women in the squads and she has participated in a squad herself in the past. I asked who did the halls then and we looked at each other and laughed. She tells a story about an old (female) schoolteacher who used to make sure everyone pulled their weight in the halls. She says it’s harder to find people to pitch in like that anymore (Fieldnotes: February 11, 2003).

In this discussion, Helga implies that the country events are better because women participate in the squads. However, she can only laugh when the question of the halls is raised. Our laughter arose out of a shared understanding of an inevitable ‘truth’:

even with women taking on a role in the squads, there will be no reverse migration of men taking on duties in the halls. Women are still expected to 'pitch in' to organize the halls and remain responsible for disciplining each other to do so. This is by no means to suggest that the women in the halls are dismayed with their participation. The hostesses of the hall I attended in 2003 conveyed an air of importance and pride, and the trail of excited young girls shadowing their grown-up counterparts presented a warm picture of a cultural tradition in the process of transmission. However, certainly, one visible 'truth' of Up-helly-aa is the mobility (social, geographical) of masculinity, as represented by the processing and performing guizers, and the corresponding immobility of femininity, as embodied by the hostesses and the spectators stationed at a hall. Together, these practices cohere into a representation of a normative, gendered Shetland subjectivity.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented evidence of some of Shetland's social, cultural, and gendered geographies. The intertwining of social, spatial and gender processes is exemplified by the empirical material presented in this chapter. The temporal and spatial arrangements of Shetland society give this formulation a particular shape. Shetland's cultural and geographical distance from the rest of Scotland contributes to the pursuit and enactment of a unique Shetland identity. This unique identity is based on a partially mythologized historical subjectivity, characterized by homage to a Norse heritage and to northern masculine hardiness. Within this socio-historical construction, women are held up to an ideal of tough self-sufficiency while living within a western patriarchal reality of gender inequality. The gendered aspect of this

particular Shetland subjectivity is reiterated in the annual Up-helly-aa performance. The Up-helly-aa event, as a space of a particular type of masculinity, reproduces and reiterates a set of gender norms, and fashions a gender normative Shetland identities which individual people may invest in or distance themselves from.

What is hinted at (for example in Helen's feelings about the misogyny of Up-helly-aa, or in the account of interpersonal tensions on the ferry), but not fully explored in this chapter, is the ways in which the ongoing encounter between gender and place is foundational to people's accounts of well-being. As this chapter has established how Shetland is both placed and gendered, it is to an explicit consideration of emotional well-being in Shetland that I now turn.

Shetland's Geographies of Emotional Well-being

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents definitions of and stories about emotional well-being in Shetland. This empirical material, derived mainly from interviews, demonstrates that understandings of well-being are made up of interwoven social, spatial, and psychic layers. In the analysis of this material I first consider the presence of contemporary social discourses of emotional well-being. Such discourses encourage the attainment of stability, balance, and holistic health. Next, I consider how the accounts of emotional well-being reflect an assumption of individual responsibility for achieving such states. Exploring this sense of responsibility further, I explore the relationship between emotion and gender in the interviewees' descriptions of emotional well-

being. Finally, I consider how senses of place feature in their accounts of emotional well-being and investigate how self and place become intertwined in the overlapping of psychic territories and experiences of place.

5.2 Social Discourses of Emotional Well-being

5.2.1 Happiness?

When introducing my research on emotional well-being, I am often asked if I am referring to 'happiness'. Indeed, this seems to be a straightforward assumption. Yet, relatively few of my interview respondents made such a direct link between emotional well-being and happiness.⁷¹ Most people offered a sense of well-being as something more complex, a state involving both the presence of certain experiences (balance, relationships, and health) and the absence of others (i.e. upheaval, large populations, crime). Felicity, for example, suggests that happiness as a concept is not adequate to explain her sense of emotional well-being:

Deborah: what determines [emotional well-being] for you?

Felicity: well, I suppose in a very nebulous way, it's am I feeling happy, but then of course what happiness is is a sometimes a difficult concept.... [Emotional well-being is] when yeah, life just seems to be going along quite nicely, I don't look for it in everyday life, I don't

⁷¹ In the opening of almost every interview I asked the question 'are you happy to be anonymous?' when obtaining consent. Despite the introduction of this word 'happy', only moments before asking for people's senses of emotional well-being, still relatively few people invoked this state in their discussions of emotional well-being.

like for any great massive peaks ... y'know they're nice every now and again but I think yes, just being quite, contented, in what I'm doing is probably what I look for is when, am I happy, just puttering about, doing stuff, and it's interesting (Felicity 2003).

Felicity begins with the idea of 'feeling happy' but finds this a bit 'nebulous' and 'difficult' to explain in a satisfactory way. She turns to the idea of life as a movement, 'going along' and suggests that happiness might be the 'peaks' of such an ongoing progress. But, she is not seeking such highs and is instead looking for an evenness of experience expressed as 'puttering about', 'contented', and 'doing stuff'. Jo similarly suggests that emotional well-being for her is not about happiness. She is seeking the stability of contentment instead of a 'roller-coaster': "It's not necessarily about being really happy anymore. It's just about being at peace and stable and not being a roller-coaster anymore" (Jo 2003). Catriona describes emotional well-being as feeling happy, but qualifies this definition explaining that it is the "tasks of everyday life" that are important: "I think [the definition of emotional well-being is] for folks to be able to function in a way which they feel happy and able to fulfill the tasks of their everyday life" (Catriona 2002). This again suggests that it is an evenness that is important, a daily quality that is more desirable than the excesses of a "roller-coaster".

5.2.2 Balance

Closely related to the metaphor of evenness is that of balance. When asked to describe what emotional well-being means, many of my respondents used the

metaphor of balance, as Liz does: "It is about keeping things in balance" (Liz 2002). Balance is a popular contemporary theme, with the emphasis on work-life balance offering just one example of this modern quest for stability (e.g. McDowell 2004). Nancy comments: "emotional well-being means that I can live my life feeling, being in contact with my emotions, but also dealing with them in a way that can bring me back into a balance" (Nancy 2002). Implicit in this statement, is the possibility and hence anxiety that emotions can put one off balance. Buried within this notion of balance is the familiar trope of emotions as 'out of control'. As Nancy spoke, she gestured with her hands, drawing a line in the air. She showed me how she could be above or below that line but was always moving back towards that line. This balance point she further described as "the place where I feel ok" (Nancy 2002).

Significantly, the ideal of balance is something that Nancy feels can only be achieved by her active management of her emotions. She must "deal with" her emotions:

The ideal for me would be to be balanced emotionally, to feel that if I had a day where I was feeling sad or a day I was feeling happy, that I could cope with these different emotions with some degree of sensitivity and awareness but also deal with them appropriately. So that, emotionally everyday I would not be the same, but I would have a realistic idea of what was going on for me and be able to deal with that in a way that I felt that I could deal with it and get back to a balance again (Nancy 2002).

Nancy emphasises her sense of individual agency about, and indeed responsibility for, her emotional well-being which ideally manifests as balance. For her this is “realistic” and demonstrates her ability to “cope”, a skill that takes “sensitivity and awareness”. Nancy does not wish to attain a state of unchanging emotional stasis. Nor is she striving for the elimination of her emotions. Rather, she goes on to say that she strives for an “inner awareness” of herself as “the being, the person”. It is this quality of attentive awareness, she feels, that leads to a positive state of balance and thus to a sense of emotional well-being. She desires an awareness of emotion without being overwhelmed by emotion.

McDowell points out in her discussion of work/life balance that, ironically, the desire for ‘balance’ is dependent upon an underlying severe imbalance; in this case that McDowell refers to, the imbalance is in the highly gendered division of labour in industrial societies (McDowell 2004: 148). Linda finds a similarly underlying gender imbalance when the issue is women’s emotional health:

Linda: I do think that somethin that always seems to be evident in women’s emotional health whether it gets acknowledged or not is the power imbalance...between men and women (Linda 2002).

This acknowledgment of an existing inequality suggests that the task of achieving balance as a route to emotional well-being is more complex than it might initially appear. For example, the lack of balance in the social world may make the attainment of individual emotional balance difficult to achieve.

5.3 'Making sense' (of self)

5.3.1 The 'whole' person

The ideal of well-being as balance is directly related to the lay discourse of holistic health, an increasingly popular discourse that promotes the harmonious union of 'body, mind and spirit'. Beth expressed her agreement with this point: "I just ken* for mesel* that physically if I'm no right it really affects me ken*, I has to, I cannae see how you can separate the two [the physical and the emotional]" (Beth 2003). Several interviewees emphasised that emotional well-being encompasses but also exceeds emotional terms:

For me, emotional well-being is just a part of it, because for me it's a balance of physical well-being, emotional well-being and what I would say would be spiritual and I don't mean that in a in a religious way but in a inner awareness of me as the being, as the person, so for me there's a balance, it's no* just about one thing (Nancy 2002).

I think for me, emotional well-being is directly connected to physical and spiritual well-being. It's something that I don't think you can actually separate and treat entirely by itself, the whole lot has to be, a holistic approach, I think is the right term. And, I think that in a nutshell, what that means is having a healthy understanding of the self, and an acceptance of the self, the past and the now, and the desire to grow and embrace change (Andrea 2003).

One thing I'd like to say for me personally is that my emotional well-being, I like to be feelin physically göd*, that's always been quite important to me, that's gettin more important as I get older so I try as much as I can to look after mesel* physically. I'm just that type a person and ken, I like to eat as well as I can and do the exercises, cause if I'm feeling low physically that affects my emotions and the older I've got the more that I'm bein aware a dat* (Beth 2003).

I think emotional and physical well-being are linked, but it's difficult, if you don't have an acceptance of your state in one it'll be difficult to be comfortable in your other, so y'know I see a person as a whole and if you are in a state of acceptance of your physical well-being or not, that that's gonna affect your emotional well-being (Lynn 2002).

These four different women describe emotional well-being in very similar ways, suggesting the familiarity and currency of this particular discourse of well-being. For Nancy, well-being is about more than "one thing". Andrea describes these multiple aspects as "directly connected". Beth explains that the physical affects the emotional. And Lynn too is sure that a person is made up of physical and emotional aspects and she suggests that individuals must be at ease in both elements to be comfortable and whole. The similar language used, and Andrea's concern she is using the "right term", imply a referencing to an external authoritative discourse with particular, acknowledged subject positions. All four women speak to, and of, a feeling of wholeness. While this resonance could be explored in a number of ways, for example

through an analysis of health as a part of consumer culture (i.e. Doel and Segrott 2003), or through a discussion of an increasingly secular world, I am most interested in what these descriptions suggest for processes of subjectivity.

5.3.2 Self-management of emotional well-being

In a discussion of self-help and popular commentary on understanding the emotions, Harding and Pribram suggest that such narratives “address and constitute subjects who, once in possession of such understandings, might be in better control of their own emotional (negative and damaging) responses to situations” (Harding and Pribram 2002: 408). Thus, the assumed to be freely choosing self, is made responsible for one’s emotional management. Nancy, Andrea, Beth, and Lynn all describe a sense of personal responsibility for emotional well-being. Their understanding of seeking a holistic well-being includes achieving individual self-awareness, self-understanding, self-acceptance: a taking care of the self by the self. A similar focus on the self is identified by Doel and Segrott (2003) who examine the presentation of complementary and alternative medicine in the British health and lifestyle magazines. They argue health is a ‘highly individualised project’ and quote from sociologist, Zygmunt Bauman: “In an age of consumerism, individuals are doomed to seek ‘biographical solutions’ to systemic contradictions’ (Bauman, 2001, p. 23)” (Doel and Segrott 2003: 142). This strategy is apparent in Linda’s articulation of emotional well-being as a process of making (internal) sense of the effects of external events:

I'm just workin this through really as I'm saying it, so it might come across a bit raw ... I find that people will have had life events which will have affected them in some way or another and coloured their view of life in some way or another and because of this lack of communicatin, what's happened to you and how you dealt wi* it, often feelins that people experience which are really when you start looking at em quite a logical progression or a result of what they've experienced, but some of these feelings can be so overwhelming that people often think that they're, to coin a phrase, loopy, or goin off their head or crazy. A lot a dealing with emotional well-being can be something as simple as putting things into perspective, makin sense out a something. Does that make sense? (Linda 2002).

Linda describes the need to make sense out of non-sense, out of those life events that overwhelm people with a feeling of being "crazy". Linda demonstrates this technique as she talks, "working it through" as she's speaking and clarifying with her audience to ensure she is "making sense". Again, there is an emphasis on the self as a responsible agent who will discover a "logical progression" of feelings. This self must be aware or be made aware and it is this state of awareness that offers the key to emotional well-being.

Helen's definition of emotional well-being encapsulates much of the above discussion:

I would be thinking of the totality of the person, the um emotional well-being affecting the physical well-being, and I would think of emotional well-being, I would use the analogy of um, like, a person's mental states being similar to a place within a home, a house, like an attic where you can have different approaches to, like on one hand you can have the sort of Mrs. Havisham's in *Great Expectations* where the clocks have stopped, the place is piled with memories and there's no movement and there's no, it's utterly static and stale as an emotional life. Well-being to me would be the opposite of that where you go in and you spring clean you clear all the dust out you fill the rubbish bag, you look at things, you get things filed in a way that you can find information you can um, so that when you come in up there the place feels light and airy and there's movement and there's not a stockpile of issues lying around waitin' to be tended to but never get looked at. That become, that can become so much that the place is just filled to the brim and groaning at the seams and nothing gets down and then people get physical seizure. So that's my thinking of it. (Helen 2002).

Helen, like the other woman above, sees totality as an important feature of emotional well-being. She also imagines emotional well-being through the metaphor of a house, drawing on the symbolism of the home as the heart of basic human needs (compare the earlier discussion of home spaces in Chapter Two). If cluttered, the house

“groans” and “seizes”. As a responsible emotional self, she functions as the housekeeper of her emotional well-being.

The search for stability, balance, and making sense may reflect a life-stage colloquially known as ‘settling down’, as the interview respondents ranged in age from late thirties to late sixties with an average age of forty-six. However, the resort to biography is more complex than an analysis of individual factors would suggest. As Doel and Segrott report, the complementary and alternative medicine literature is mostly directed towards women and thus the ‘health project’ is not just individualised, it is also gendered. In addition to the gender bias of such complementary and alternative health practices, gender remains a distinctive feature of experiences of encounters with dominant health practices. Thus, a pharmacist I shared coffee with in Lerwick informed me that ninety-nine percent of her clients are women (Fieldnotes: July 12, 2002). Her point was that while prescriptions are written for everyone, it is nearly always a woman who collects them and hence assumes at least the initial responsibility for learning the necessary details of administering the medication. Despite this responsibility assumed by women, women often report encountering disrespect or disbelief when faced with a health professional (L. Anderson et al. 2000). Individual biographies and gender discourses intersect to produce distinctly contoured emotional geographies.

5.4 Gendering emotional well-being

“...the decision wasn’t made on the basis of gender, it was made on the basis of my own feelings” (Marie 2003).

As discussed in Chapter Two, emotional experience has been accorded the province of women. Emotion has been characterized in feminized fashion such that having emotions is equated to being soft, being a girl, being hysterical; in short, emotion is all that rational masculinity is not. In the interviews for this research project, respondents conveyed a variety of opinions and experiences that relate to gender and emotional well-being. In some cases, an adherence to familiar gender stereotypes of emotion was apparent, as when Andrea refers to women as “emotionally ruled” and as “natural carers”, when Judy suggests women’s emotional needs are different from men’s, or when Mary notes men’s inability to show emotion in comparison to women: “[women] dinnae have so much difficulty and they can shed tears and it can sorta flow and they dinnae feel embarrassed about it the same as a man does I think, I think they cope wi* it easier” (Mary 2002).

In other conversations, such assumptions of gender were acknowledged but complicated, exceeded, or contradicted by individual experience. So, Beth noted that her father, unusually, was the emotional one in her family:

...me faider’s* more emotional than me mother, so, he would tend to be the emotional one and she would be the closed one, still like that, so, she’s very much da*, oh I’d imagine yeah, ‘pull your socks up and get on wi it’ ‘keep quiet what’re ya fussing aboot’ it’s just too ‘why do you need all this fuss’, ken*? it’s just, she cannae go there, whereas me faider’s a bit more approachable with the emotions ken,

kinda strange. I'm not saying women should be, shouldna be like that, ken" (Beth 2003).

In Beth's analysis it is "strange", noteworthy that her father is emotionally open, while her mother "cannae go there". Her mother is not emotionally approachable, and Beth does not necessarily think she needs to be. Nevertheless, Beth goes on to suggest an explanation for her mother's attitude of "getting on with it".

I mean possibly it's because they're older and come fae* that as well the older generation, you certainly didn't make a fuss you just, you just got on wi* it, ken*? [...] I mean it's very much the women, it's very much just busying herself with other folk's needs, their family and ken, but no really taking time for herself, ken" (Beth 2003).

Beth's mother, she feels, is not emotional in the sense that she does not attend to her own emotional needs. She does, however, take responsibility for others' needs and Beth sees this as symptomatic of her mother's generation of women, not her own. Beth's reading of this indicates how individual biographies mesh with processes of cultural change, including the shifting of normative gender expectations (cf. Nielsen 2003) In Beth's historical moment, unlike her mother's as she has indicated, she suggests that women are encouraged to attend to their own feelings.

Marie, as indicated in the title quote of this section, does not make decisions on the basis of gender, but on the basis of her feelings, stressing her sense that feelings are

separate from gender. For Marie, a significant piece of her emotional well-being comes from her employment. Much of Marie's interview revolved around the importance of her employment experiences and the choices she has made around employment. She described her first job in Shetland nearly two decades ago:

I had a very small child ... but I got a job within about 4 months, I had to travel to [a neighbouring island] to do it.... I think the thing about I didn't actually think about it one way or the other at the time, it was just something I was quite interested in doing, but, I understand since then that the perception was that I was I was having to support the family y'know and that wasn't acceptable [laughs]

Deborah: ah, I was just going to ask you how that was for you at the time, given that you were saying that there's this belief [about women not going out to work], but you didn't feel it at the time

Marie: no, I don't think, in fact I've always worked really, it's not, wherever I've been I've always worked, so it wasn't something particularly odd to me at all, in fact the sort of work that I do is probably, it's a very steady part in my life y'know, it's the part that keeps everything running (Marie 2003).

Marie is clear that restrictive gender norms have not affected her employment choices, even though she is aware of some censure, particularly of her working

mother status. Work has been a central part of her life, 'the part that keeps everything running'. Despite occasional pressure, Marie has learned to value her love of her job.

There have been times that I think perhaps I have made to feel that that was a negative thing where people have said 'oh no you shouldn't you shouldn't do it', not necessarily because women didn't go out to work or anything, but also from other women who go out to work saying that I work too hard, but, I think since then, especially particularly recently, I've learnt to say y'know 'this is my life' and this is, 'I enjoy work'. I do, and I don't want to feel pressurized to think that the way it's done is something negative (Marie 2003).

Marie's account suggests her resistance to an implied gendering of roles. Focused on work outside the home, a traditionally masculine space, Marie challenges such spatial practices. Even though Marie is clearly aware that a politics of gender threads through the responses to her devotion to a working life, she frames her experiences in a personal biography. She stresses the experience of her individual emotional realm over the issue of gender. In this separation, Marie exemplifies a distinction made by Chodorow (1999) between a personal and a cultural gender.

Chodorow suggests that feminist assumptions of exclusively cultural or linguistic constructions of gender have minimized the significance of personal emotional meaning such that the cultural referencing assumes priority over the potential nuances of personal meaning:

Gender meanings, as feminism has argued, are certainly indeterminate and contested, but they are indeterminate and contested not only culturally and politically but also as they are shaped and reshaped by an emotional self. Like other processes of psychological creation of meaning, gender identity, gender fantasy, the sense of gender, and the sexual identifications and fantasies that are part of this identity are formed and reformed through out the life cycle (Chodorow 1999: 72).

Chodorow argues that “senses of self, the tone of individual feelings, and emotionally imbued unconscious fantasies are as constitutive of subjective gender as is language or culture” (Chodorow 1999: 72). Considering the ways in which gender is fashioned as a personal and emotional construction, as Chodorow suggests, reveals how individuals make new meanings as per their particular psycho-biographies, as Marie does. An attention to the ‘emotional self’ reminds us of the ongoing processes of subjectivity at work in our emotional interactions with the world around us.

5.5 Placing Emotional Well-being

5.5.1 “Where you ought to be”

Research with residents in a Scottish housing scheme revealed that they linked their feelings about their place of residence with well-being (Airey 2003), demonstrating that there are psycho-social dimensions to experiences of place. For Aileen, a resident of Shetland for 37 years, well-being is about being “where you ought to be”

and for her that place is Shetland: “I feel that I’m happier, I’m happy living here, I’d rather be here than any other place that I’ve been” (Aileen 2003).

In Shetland, there are some straightforward ways in which place and a sense of emotional well-being are intertwined. Several people describe the anxiety that precedes plans to travel from Shetland, as both the boat and the plane are liable to cancellations due to extreme weather conditions. The northern winter also affects well-being in other ways, for example, Judy noted that she can “get very tired sometimes through the winter, and you feel sometimes quite cut off” (Judy 2002). For Lynn, it is critical that she is able to maintain an active lifestyle throughout the winter: “If Shetland didn’t have the wealth that it [does] have it couldn’t afford to run the indoor leisure facilities. If it was only outdoor pursuits in the winter, that would be quite difficult to do. I think my emotional health would suffer” (Lynn 2002).

Aside from perceptions of how the weather can affect feelings, two distinct but overlapping spatial discourses of Shetland are evoked by women discussing their well-being. The first is the experiencing of Shetland as a restrictively bound community fostering certain anxieties, and the second is of Shetland as a contained community within which people feel safe and secure. Interviewees who describe Shetland via the first discourse – Shetland as a bound community – are both Shetlanders and incomers. Linda, for example, a Shetlander who lives in a rural part of Mainland, notes that there is very little anonymity in her neighbourhood and described how she was ‘seen’ and later teased for pausing for breath while jogging up a hill alone (Fieldnotes: January 21, 2002). In this instance, Linda experienced a

sense of unwelcome surveillance, limiting her personal freedom. Marie, an incomer who has lived most of her adult life in the Northern Isles, tells a darker tale of harassment and stalking that occurred over a period of years.⁷² In her story, a stretch of road that dips between two hills provided the space for her tormentor to harass her. On a small island community with minimal traffic, the quiet road ensured they were out of sight of local houses. In this case, a lack of visibility created a sense of dangerous isolation.

The feelings of anxiety that these women experience are more than physically circumscribed. The narratives of a strong communal identity and the prizing of strength/hardiness and normative masculinity as described above create a potentially harmful power imbalance and leave little space for the expression of emotional affairs. Linda expresses her sense that Shetland and emotions have yet to be acquainted: “We’re deeply rooted in a culture where people don’t exchange ah, feelins emotions fears um, even I would say positive emotions, happy, happiness and joy, I think that we’re very deeply rooted in a culture of suppressing feelins” (Linda 2002).

This culture of suppressing feelings finds Andrea, an incomer of close to ten years, in difficulty. She finds it problematic but necessary to hold back her feelings in her very small community:

⁷² Marie did not wish to record the details of this situation, hence the brevity of description.

There's about two hundred people spread over quite a large radius and it's very difficult to walk down to take my child to school, to go to the shop and not see, not see someone who will say 'hiya how are ya doing?' and if, I can't speak for all women, but for my self, if there's something bothering me I find it very difficult to actually have a smile on my face, look like there's nothing wrong with me, I don't do that very well. I suppose the downside of living here for me on a personal level is sometimes I wish I was anonymous and I could walk down the street and nobody'd actually know who I was (Andrea 2003).

Andrea feels the close quarters of her area create a situation in which she has to pretend that nothing is "bothering" her even if she is unhappy. In her account, she expressed her longing for anonymity, for a place where she could be unknown, walk down the street and not be asked to pretend she is fine. Again, the framing of Shetland as a tightly bound social space is described as limiting personal freedom and the expression of emotion. And yet, as Andrea goes on to describe, she simultaneously experiences a sense of safety in this closed community: "I wish I was anonymous, and yet I go south for a holiday and can't wait to get back up here where everybody knows me and feel safe. So there's an awful lot of sort of lines" (Andrea 2003).

For Felicity, Shetland unambiguously offers a place of safety. An incomer of just a few years, Felicity positively interprets the close boundaries of the small community:

[Shetland's] such a close community which I think suits me. I like the fact that when I go down the street in Lerwick I'm gonna meet people that I know, and that I've got friends that I can phone up and it's a close community. I think actually being in Shetland actually helps, is far better for me, cause I've always got people I can call on. There's a feeling of security, and I don't feel isolated up here (Felicity 2003).

Felicity feels supported by her sense that people are close at hand. The proximity of others, friends and people she knows, ensures she does not feel isolated.

Linda, a Shetlander, offers her sense that Shetland is self-contained, a feeling she speculates may come from her position as a Shetlander:

Possibly if you're an incomer you could feel that Shetland is remote, mostly probably because of the expense of gettin south to see your family, and there could be a feeling of remoteness because of that, but I can only speak as a Shetlander and somehow there's not a feeling of remoteness there's a feeling of bein very self-contained (Linda 2002).

The vision of Shetland as isolated or remote, Linda suggests, is a matter of perspective. Linda's description of containment conveys a sense of fit, resonating with Bachelard's description of the snail in its shell (Bachelard 1994 [1958]). This feeling of self-containment suggests a neatness of being in the right place, of being, as Andrea commented earlier, "where you ought to be". However, Linda goes on to

say that this contained place results in the valuing of contained people and this too might be limiting: “what would be looked on as being an admirable quality in Shetland would be that people are very self-contained and sort out their own lives without resorting to asking for help from others” (Linda 2002). The multiple “lines” of these overlapping senses of Shetland indicated the shifting nature of psycho-social engagements with the spaces we live in and move through.

5.5.2 ‘A special place’

For some of the incomer interviewees, Shetland is more than *where* they ought to be, it has become part of *who* they want to be. These women explicitly describe Shetland and their decision to relocate to Shetland as forming a significant place in their psychic landscape. In particular, this placing of/in Shetland formed a part of narratives about experiences of depression. These were not, as stereotypes of bleak and isolated northern communities might suggest, stories of depression attributed to living in Shetland. Rather, in these narratives, Shetland represents a move away from depression, and thus a move toward emotional well-being.

Felicity, a woman of wide-ranging talents with a capacious intellect, describes herself as having “problems with depression”. The move to Shetland, she feels, gave her space to enhance her emotional well-being:

For me really actually moving up to Shetland helped my emotional well-being a lot, because I actually left behind the place where a lot of my problems at the time and the stresses and such like had been

caused... Even though I was living in this little cottage on X through the winter it wasn't a problem, in fact I was quite happy, I felt quite safe and secure up there. Think it was a feeling that no one could get me, get at me (Felicity 2003).

Safety and security characterize Felicity's feelings about her relocation. Even though she was isolated during her first winter this reinforced her feeling that she was out of reach of her former anxieties, feelings left behind at her previous address. Felicity is not suggesting the move has eliminated her depression. She comments: "although, I mean I still have problems with depression, certainly none of it's made worse by the fact that I live in Shetland and for me probably....[it] is far better for me" (Felicity 2003). Felicity feels she is in a better place, and this describes both a psychic and a geographical state.

Julia has a passion for Shetland. She has resided on one of the Northern Isles for a similar time period to Felicity, almost two years. In her story of self, Julia represents her decision to live in Shetland as the key to her sense of well-being, exemplifying how a conscious choice of place can be a way of demonstrating one's worldview and exploring self identities (Manzo 2003: 53). For all the incomers to the isles interviewed during this research, the idea of making a choice about a living place had a particular resonance, and in Julia's case she describes an almost mystical experience of arriving on her chosen isle:

Julia: ... I got up here and saw the light y'know, talked through an awful lot of stuff with myself and it was a new beginning, definitely a new beginning ... what struck me about [this isle] when I got here was [this isle] was the [place] of my youth.

Deborah: hmm, long ways to travel back

Julia: well, yeah, but it was going back (Julia 2003).

Intriguingly, Julia characterizes her move to Shetland as a journey back to her past. She suggests that this psychic journey is both a “going back” to the place of her youth and an opportunity to begin anew. Julia has also experienced depression and she explains that her move to Shetland had a positive impact on her mental health: “When I came up here my confidence was high and I really didn’t need to take any medication anymore” (Julia 2003). She goes on to say that she felt secure in the care she received from her new doctor:

The doctor talked [my depression] through with me. He said well you are in a high now but there are going to be, going to have lows, let’s just perhaps cut down your medication, and [he] just walked me through it. The care is just incredible (Julia 2003).

When I asked her what she attributed the “incredible” level of care to, she spoke of health professionals on the island having more time to tend to people and a

willingness to combine “modern technology” with “old ways”. She illustrates her point by sharing her daughter’s experience: Julia’s daughter is pregnant and recently moved from Shetland to England. On the island, Julia describes, her daughter had received the best of care and had known that she only had to pick up the phone and the nurse would make time for her. In contrast, Julia explained, a recent trip to the hospital in England’s south-west had left her daughter in tears as she struggled to find someone to attend to her needs.

In Julia’s view, the small population ensures people receive more immediate attention from the island’s healthcare professionals. Julia’s feeling is at odds with some of the realities of healthcare services in Shetland. While Julia laments her pregnant daughter’s return to the south, in fact, Shetland-based first-time mothers are often sent miles south to Aberdeen for their delivery in case of complications that Shetland’s hospital cannot accommodate. Nevertheless, Julia represents the quality of her emotional well-being on the island in the highest terms. Similar to Felicity, though with her own unique story, Julia’s subjective experiences, including her use of Shetland in the creation of a psychic landscape, directly contribute to her feelings of well-being.

5.6 Narrating Emotional Well-being

As the previous section suggests, feelings and places mingle in order to create a sense of emotional well-being (or lack of). In this next section, I look at some further instances of how people ‘place’ themselves as a way to achieve emotional well-

being. I am interested here in how people make use of the way they are 'placed' to express their stories of self.

5.6.1 Placing the Self

Lynn is a neat, spare Scottish woman, as economical in her manner of expression as in her appearance, with the exception of an evident delight in vibrantly coloured clothes. In her interview, Lynn demonstrates how her self-expression is bound up in her feelings for her current community and home community.

Lynn has lived much of her adult life as a sooth-moother* in Shetland. Her positioning as an incomer to Shetland society, even after almost twenty years, continues to come with attendant restrictions and freedoms. Lynn explains how her status as an outsider gives her the space to 'care less' in Shetland:

I think if you're brought up in a community you know what the community is going to think and say, you know what's likely to be said behind closed doors when people are gossiping and that kind of thing..., and as someone who's come into the community that would trouble me less because **I care less** about some of the people who are going to be sayin those things (Lynn 2002, emphasis in the original).

Lynn describes how cultural expectations within Shetland, 'what the community is going to think and say', construct subject positions for local selves. In Lynn's view, an incomer unaccompanied and unencumbered by such expectations can find a

certain freedom in her or his self narration. Lynn's relationship with the community, then, happens in the absence of a cultural story, or rather, as a consequence of her absence within the Shetland cultural story. In this blank space, she has a certain amount of license to create her own subject position(s). As she does not feel required to practice a Shetland story, she experiences a psychic freedom. She finds she is able to "care less" about the community and this means she feels able to express herself in possible contradiction to community norms without fear of censure. Lynn has the space to do this by making an "emotional separation" that is not, in her opinion, accessible to the local folk: "I think it's harder to care less about the people that you've grown up with, even if you say you do, I think it's harder to actually emotionally separate that" (Lynn 2002). In her explanation, Lynn suggests that there is an emotional investment in the place and people of one's community of origin that makes it difficult to separate oneself from the expectations of that community.

Although Lynn feels her incomer status allows her to have a certain distance from the cares of the community and from her caring for the community and what they might think, and so is freed in some measure from the strictures of Shetland society, she is not suggesting that she is floating free of any position, nor that she should be:

Obviously you still, as an incoming person you have to find your place in the community and the community is either going to allow you a place ehm and certain members of the community is gonna allow you a place... (Lynn 2002).

She recognizes that she has to “find a place” within the community. But, Lynn acknowledges that finding a place is not as simple as seeking it out; community members must also “allow” this to take place. There is a degree of caution in her expression: she doesn’t complete her sentence, but her phrase “the community is either going to allow you a place” is easily finished with “or not”. She senses that both individual and social pressures contribute to needing to find a place.

Despite the faintly ominous implication that the community might choose to exclude outsiders, Lynn ascribes a great significance to the freedom she has in her self-definition as an incomer, a freedom that comes from being essentially unknown in Shetland:

they’ve no idea what the framework that I was brought up in is on certain things, I mean obviously because I’m Scottish and there’s a whole cultural thing that Shetland’s not that far away from ehm, but there’s other differences that you can, y’know I can present as this is how I think, and they don’t know where that’s come from so I’m perhaps less likely to be censored on certain things (Lynn 2002).

Lynn feels that the community has ‘no idea’ of her original framework (even though Lynn has been in Shetland for almost twenty years). She has the sense that she can “present” her thoughts and her listeners “don’t know where that’s come from” so they cannot “censor” her.

I've been able to come away, define myself, ehm, and not having to fight against my community to do that and the new community sees me just as 'well, this is who Lynn is and how she is' (Lynn 2002).

Lynn's description of life as a perpetual incomer highlights the significance of place in both self-perception and the presentation and reception of selves (and the emotional spaces therein). Her terms are instructive in sketching out the power dynamics of the production of self. As an incomer, she "defines" herself, "who Lynn is and how she is"; she also alludes to the struggle that can exist in a community where one is known. Here in Shetland, she doesn't have to "fight against [her] community".

Reflecting on how she defines herself in relationship to Shetland leads Lynn to think through her emotional connections and disconnections with her 'home' in mainland Scotland. She finds both advantages and disadvantages in living at a distance from her family:

I have this y'know distance from my family that I have to come ta, I've had to come to terms with the fact that I see my family only in certain blocks so many times a year and that don't always happen, but there's also the advantage of that in that I've come away from knowing how everybody'll feel about certain things and what their rules and standards are and I'm able to be much freer here about deciding what my rules and [laughing] standards are and not having to

worry about is this gonna trouble my parents or other members of my family, or other friends that I grew up with and who actually I might have moved away from in my thinking ... (Lynn 2002).

Lynn describes three types of movement 'away' in this speech: the physical distancing from her family she achieves by being somewhere else, the interrelated emotional distancing that allows her to find relief from the worry that she will 'trouble' her parents, family or friends, and the moving away she speculates she might have done in her own thinking.

As she continues on from the above excerpt, she shifts from speaking in rather general terms about the "rules" and "standards" she is able to distance herself from through these various movements, and engages in a more specific discussion of gender rules and boundaries:

... I might have moved away from in my thinking, and how I see women and how I see women in life ehm, it's much easier for me say well this is how I'm going to now define it because I think any community tries to keep y'know women within the framework of the community [...] therefore it's harder for women to break away from the framework of the community while they're still living in it (Lynn 2002).

In her analysis there is a clear gender politics to acceptable community behaviour. Women who step outside of their communities, both in literal and philosophical terms, Lynn suggests, are breaking the rules. But, by breaking the rules, the leavers paradoxically escape the rules. Part of Lynn's feelings of freedom as an incomer in Shetland come from this explicit escape from the gendered aspects of community boundaries. In Shetland, she is allowed to live outside the rules of the community, and so, to a certain extent, she escapes the (socially normative, community-defined) rules of gender.

5.6.2 Holding the self in place: Enclosure

"She covered her face with her hands as the struggling rose in her chest, a tide of terrible sobbing that she would not let break. A few moments, minutes perhaps – *let nothing show*—and she was ready. As ready as possible. Breathing deep, taking her time, Clara lifted up her head. The waxy wooden banister was firm beneath her hand" (Galloway 2003: 373). (Emphasis in the original).

... it would appear there's a theme of not appearing vulnerable and needy therefore although folks have practical support that could be, and in many ways might be used in terms of emotional health...[U]ntil fairly recently there's been a fair reticence about making it known that 'I am not coping' (Catriona 2002).

In the brief excerpt from *Clara*⁷³, by Scottish novelist Janice Galloway, Clara evinces a common attitude towards the expression of emotion: she struggles against letting it break through the surface. Despite a terrible pressure, she refuses to let anything show. Like the wooden banister she holds on to, she endeavours to present a smooth surface to the outside and to maintain a strong inner core. This brief glimpse into Clara's world evokes self-containing attitudes towards emotional excess. While admiration for such restraint can be easily placed in the nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries, the legacy of such attitudes lingers on in present-day culture. In Shetland, where heroic Vikings and hardy women feature in popular history, such control is still prized. As Catriona suggests above, Shetland people have preferred to appear invulnerable. Linda explains:

an admirable quality in Shetland would be that people are very self-contained and sort out their own lives without resorting to asking for help from others. Think it's probably seen as a sign of weakness to ask for help (Linda 2002).

These descriptions make it clear that in Shetland culture, an emotionally contained self is preferable and demonstrates strength. "Asking for help" betrays emotional

⁷³ *Clara* portrays the life of Clara Schumann, an accomplished nineteenth-century concert pianist, composer, teacher, mother, and wife to the now better known and celebrated composer, Robert Schumann. Despite the initial brilliance of Clara's career, her life's work becomes the maintenance of Robert's sanity as he is increasingly distracted and distressed by voices, compulsions and obsessions. Clara's positioning as the socially and self-appointed guardian of her husband's well-being is painfully articulated as she struggles to reconcile her need to play music, and the financial and physical demands of eight children, with the great burden of caring for Robert. In the parade of doctors who tend to him, Clara's knowledge of Robert's illness is never sought; instead, to her unbearable distress, one doctor implies his illness may be a result of *her* hysterical nature.

need. Within the Shetland cultural discourse, emotional need is equated to weakness and therefore no one is going to admit to needing help.

Linda explains that a 'close family' in the Shetland context is one that offers 'practical' aid to its members:

I can only tell you my view of what I would call very close families is that they're there for one another [car goes by] in the sense that they keep contact wi* one another a lot um, they maybe visit one another a lot, they would be there to help out at, in, I would say in practical ways, but I don't really have a great sense of people talkin about emotion. I could be wrong but that, that's my sense of it, it's more doing things for people who are members of your family, rather than sharing and a voicing of how they feel about themselves and other people (Linda 2002).

'Closeness' is defined by keeping in contact, visiting and 'being there' in practical terms. It is not about the expression of emotion through oral communication. At first this suggests a prioritizing of a non-verbal form of support. I asked Linda if this indicated a kind of community cohesion – a strength in a collective that does not require speech for consolidation. But, as Linda went on, she offered a different interpretation: "What you term 'Shetland tightness' seems to depend on people not challengin, bein open and confrontational with one another" (Linda 2002). Linda's

reading of 'closeness' is that it depends on the suppression of difference by restricting or eliminating openly sharing or challenging others.

Helen offers a powerful image of this repression occurring across time and space: "It's almost like making bread or rough puff pastry where it's like the secrets and the lies get folded in on one another, 'specially the secrets and it just comes down and the next generation and the next generation" (Helen 2002). In her evocative imagery, the Shetland community functions to secrete emotional material in an ongoing folding and refolding. The metaphor of making dough suggests a very deliberate and active repression while making the point that in such a process nothing is lost or resolved, but simply held in or stuck inside.

Nancy, who grew up in Scotland but has spent most of her adult life in Shetland, describes absorbing a similar message about the repression of emotion:

Nancy: I think I said to you before, my culture is not about expressing emotion.... And so that I've had to learn and still sometimes I have difficulty in, in expressing exactly how I feel, like in a, hedge around about it. We'll talk about it and think oh I'm no going to talk about it and pull back again. And usually, eventually, I will get there, but it's all a difficult process sometimes, and the more personal it is, the more emotional and personal it is, sometimes the more I have difficulty in actually expressing that.

D: mmm, mmm, and you attribute that to your sort of cultural upbringing

N: it was not a skill that I learned as a child. It's more about actually voicing the emotion and actually saying I feel sad, or I feel angry or I feel, this is how I feel. It's more about saying 'I feel' and expressing that to somebody else (Nancy 2002).

Nancy describes a process of "hedging" around emotional concerns. The use of this particular metaphor neatly conveys a sense of emotional enclosure. Nancy has learned in childhood that difficult personal emotions are better held within such a contained space. The more "emotional", the more "personal" a matter is, the more time she will spend circling that outer barrier to protect but also to avoid that vulnerable inner self. Now, Nancy suggests she seeks to free herself through the expression of her feelings. She "gets there", to these feelings, by "voicing" them to someone else. When I press further, asking how this voicing process might be restricted in a culture that values keeping to one's self, Nancy replies: "whatever way you can express your emotion, as long as you don't keep it in there and push it down and push it down. And, I mean, I think that, that's the way you become more healthy emotionally" (Nancy 2002). Again, Nancy pronounces enclosure as emotionally unhealthy. Rather than accommodating a space "in there" that holds emotions and allows them to be pushed down, Nancy suggests that the way to emotional well-being is to open out, to bring emotional material to the surface.

5.7 The “Passage through the therapeutic”

An insistence on verbal expression, or confession as Rose (1990) claims, reflects our particular time and place. In his Foucauldian reading of the shaping of the modern self, Rose argues that the latter part of the twentieth century has invented a therapeutic culture of the self and that this culture is symptomatic of our desire to be “ethical beings” (1990: 241). Within such a culture, we seek to find our “inner reality” through the process of “telling all”:

“...in confessing, one also constitutes oneself. In the act of speaking, through the obligation to produce words that are true to an inner reality, through the self-examination that precedes and accompanies speech, one becomes a subject for oneself.

Confession, then, is the diagram of a certain form of subjectification that binds us to others at the very moment we affirm our identity” (N. Rose 1990: 240).

Rose’s comments are thought-provoking in many respects, but two aspects are of particular interest here. The first is his insistence that the subjectification occurs through speaking (to another) and the second is his point that within the therapeutic encounter, we become our selves in the very moment we are bound to another. These arguments resonate. While Rose, like Foucault, offers no real gender analysis, his arguments can be extended to consider the place of gender in this diagrammatic

moment of subjectification, most simply in the sense that gender is inextricable from the processes of subjectification (Butler 1997).

5.7.1 “Express your self”: Disclosure

“After all, secrets cannot be secrets until they are spoken about as such” (Gelder and Jacobs 1998: 25).

The reason I think why counselling is proved so valuable is because of the clear and the confidence of confidentiality. [There is] great anxiety about women speaking about their deeper feelings because of the gossip not, it just, ‘shoooo’ [taking off], is rife, so I think that would be one of the reasons why there’d be not as much sharing of emotional material as in as perhaps would be in other communities (Catriona 2002).

In this final section of this chapter, I draw explicitly on some professional senses of emotional well-being offered by my first set of respondents. This group of interviewees all had some connection with offering counselling, or counselling-like services. Thus, they all have some experience of what might be termed a “therapeutic process”.

In contrast to images of containing emotion, of a relentless burying under layers and layers of repression, and in opposition to the presentation of an invulnerable front, the therapeutic process of “speaking out” is an opening out: the internal becomes

external and the revealing self is relieved of her or his emotional burden. Enclosure gives way to disclosure. In Catriona's assessment, woman accessing her counselling services feel safe to confess their "deeper feelings", as they do not in their communities where gossip may undermine a sense of security in the telling of personal stories. Such self-exposure creates vulnerability, but, importantly, the space for that vulnerability is managed, contained, bounded within the therapeutic encounter.

Interviewees who offer counselling in Shetland in some form all stressed the importance of "voicing" emotions within the therapeutic encounter. Helen refers to this as the "talking bit" (Helen 2002). Joan, who uses her counselling skills training at work and at home, says: I urge them to talk. I encourage them, y'know to say what they're feeling rather than bottle it up (Joan 2002). Catriona describes her experience in the counselling room:

The impression I have in a counselling room is that this is material that has been kept locked away, no one else has heard about it and uh, [in] the security of the counselling environment it is then divulged and it's very heartening to see the growth and healing that the individual gets from that.... [A]nd that feels like its gradually beginning to shift cultural responses to emotional distress (Catriona 2002).

The powerful images of stories under lock and key signals the profoundly emotion-laden experience that is the telling of personal stories in the therapeutic encounter.

The counselling space offers a temporary boundary which functions to contain the powerful emotions expressed and so makes safe the exploration of those feelings. The temporary boundary providing by the therapeutic bounding, allows for the self to be temporarily unbounded.

5.7.2 The (un)bounded self

As a counsellor, Lynn has a heightened professional interest in an awareness of the boundaries of the self (see Bondi and Fewell 2003a for a discussion of boundary metaphors in counselling). She perceives that the relationship between the self and stories of self (by self or by other) manifests on a number of levels depending upon various factors such as age, background and place in the community. Lynn's experience as a counsellor gives her a particular insight into the levels of emotional relating she herself offers:

I think that it's really important that the boundaries are clear, and I think that's again ... it's perhaps easier for me in some aspects and harder for me in others because I do have the knowledge I have, that's the making sure that I keep my boundaries and how I use the knowledge I have, but then in other ways because I have the knowledge that I have it makes the boundary setting clear.... I'll be more aware of trying to keep boundaries and the usefulness of people keeping boundaries (Lynn 2002).

Boundaries, she suggests, are a means of keeping self, support and others intact and distinct. She goes on to explain that she cannot eliminate her counselling knowledge from her non-counselling relations, but she regulates the support she offers in different spaces by very carefully attending to the boundaries between such levels:

I wouldn't keep necessarily my skills out of my relationships with families or friends, and I don't keep my skills that I've learned from my family and friends outwith my counselling relationship, but what I do that probably helps keep me emotionally healthier is I monitor y'know as much as I can, in **all** of those relationships, what I'm doing and by monitoring what I'm doing I can then make the decision would this be a good time to be doing this, or would it not? (Lynn 2002).

For Lynn, this intensive boundary patrolling is part of her maintenance of her emotional well-being. By maintaining an awareness of distinctions between her counselling relationships and her various supportive relationships outside of therapeutic encounters, Lynn keeps track of what is "good" for her and the other people she is engaging with. Emotional health, in Lynn's assessment, is expressed by a well-monitored and orderly self who knows when and where to express itself.

Andrea speaks about boundaries and selves from her experience as a support worker. When invited to talk about emotional well-being in the context of her professional experiences, she describes women experiencing mental health difficulties as "emotionally ruled":

Andrea: [...] they're all women who um, are very emotionally ruled, and um, know, still have a mental thread perhaps of self-worth left and they know that they can actually better themselves or build confidence y'know, achieve more than what they have at the moment, healing, y'know there's a lot of self-healing and um, desire to increase their confidence and just have a better quality of life, so that's the common thread (Andrea 2003).

Intrigued by Andrea's description of the women she supports as "emotionally ruled", I asked her to describe this concept further:

D: when you say emotionally-ruled, can you tell me about that?

Andrea: yeah! Yeah, um, where did that come from? I don't know [clears throat]. I'd say that my definition ... is not a rational, it's not a rational thought process it's um, the bare emotions are there and uh, it's well a vulnerable place to be um, and there are **no boundaries in place** for these women. There's certainly elements of it but, um, **there's not defined sort of boundaries**, for women to, for them to be able to protect themselves just from everyday life situations y'know, when perhaps the, on the receiving end of a grumpy shopkeeper and take it personally ... not able to to actually see that well perhaps it was them that had a bad day and it's not me at all. Not to be self-centred in some ways, you can't actually see beyond that, so that's the

main y'know long long-term aim is to try to introduce some self-awareness (Andrea 2003, emphasis added).

In Andrea's articulation, to be "emotionally ruled" is to be unbounded, and to be unbounded is to be unprotected and therefore unwell. An awareness of self is therefore linked to the ability to bound one's self and thus to the attainment of emotional well-being (cf. Joyce Davidson on agoraphobia). The spaces of counselling function to assist in emotional well-being by temporarily providing a boundary for the self. Thus, therapeutic spaces possibly function to both emulate and model the boundaries of the self.

5.8 Conclusion

As this chapter indicates, the geographies of emotional well-being comprise a shifting and contradictory terrain. Women conceptualize their emotional well-being in a variety of ways. For example, women's narratives of emotional well-being can be read for recognizable and contemporary discourses of health and well-being. The respondents draw from available discourses of well-being, such as balance and stability. To make sense of self, metaphors of "wholeness", of a synthesis of body and mind, are invoked. These different discourses collectively draw on an expectation of self-management, characterising emotional well-being as a personal responsibility. Yet issues of gender complicate the role of personal choice in emotional well-being, as does the acknowledgement of (potentially unconscious) personal emotional experiences such as desire. Normative expectations surrounding

women's capacity for emotional encounters can be at odds with individual experiences.

Psychic and social encounters with particular places, the expectations people hold of particular places, and the expectations particular social places hold of individuals, also affect emotional well-being. Feelings such as anxiety or comfort are two such responses that arise as a consequence of engagements with place. Decisions about where, when and how to disclose or repress feelings are made. For some, a sense of self and a sense of place are almost inseparable feelings, as exemplified by the way a chosen living place enhances feelings of personal worth, and in some cases can ease experiences of depression. Placing the self through expressing connections to place is another way of demonstrating the psychic and spatial elements of subjectivity. Incomers to Shetland describe how self expression is both restricted and freed by an incomer status. The containment of place experienced as a containment of people creates feelings of comfort and self-containment, but also uncomfortable feelings of enclosure and restriction.

Contemporary therapeutic encounters provide spaces for and encourage the disclosure of emotion. Despite the facilitative role of such therapeutic spaces, there is an underlying emphasis on ultimately self-managing the responsible expression of emotional material. An emphasis on disclosure as a means to emotional well-being raises the issue of boundaries: how, when and where is such disclosure appropriately made? Enclosure also makes use of boundaries to manage emotional well-being.

Those facilitating therapeutic encounters are highly aware of such boundaries within and without the explicitly therapeutic space of the counselling room.

In this chapter, I have shown how place, gender, and emotion are entangled within, and integral to, the processes of subjectivity. I suggest these views offer insights into how gender, place, and emotion are interwoven on an everyday scale into senses of a (healthy or unhealthy) self. The resulting articulations of emotional well-being demonstrate its social, spatial, and subjective contours. In the next chapter, I take a more specific look at geographies of intimacy and how certain self-other relations are fundamental to a sense of emotional well-being.

Shetland's Geographies of Intimacy

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I consider Shetland's geographies of intimacy as described by my interview respondents. Intimate relationships with others are shown to impact on health and well being. Intimacy as an integral aspect of emotional well-being also has a demonstrably spatial character. I focus on the following three substantive points in this chapter. The social proximity of the non-urban community renders intimacy as public instead of private as intimacy is usually assumed to be. This very social proximity and public intimacy in combination with distances between islands or between homes can function to conceal and privatise power imbalances. Issues of

distance and proximity in Shetland are central to women's accounts of attaining and sustaining intimacy in a way which leads to well-being. These accounts unsettle assumptions about intimacy and its relation to proximity and distance. Spatialities of intimacy are revealed as not simply about the closeness of "us" in polarized opposition to a strange(r) distance but as a more complex spatiality of intimate distances.

6.2 Intimacy as a measure of well-being

Intimacy is about proximal relationships to others and these relationships profoundly affect our emotional well-being. Intimacy is popularly assumed to offer the familiarity and warmth of close association. As I elaborate below, this assumption depends on a spatial logic which equates affective closeness with spatial proximity. This spatial logic assumes equal ground, an assumption of democracy which potentially flattens dynamics such as power and gender, and expresses a desire for sameness in the making of two (difference) into one (sameness).



Figure 7: *The Kiss*

Brancusi's sculpture *The Kiss* (1907-8) enacts several aspects of a familiar version of intimacy: an intimacy we understand as developing usually, though not always, between two people as a consequence of love. These figures above are face-to-face, eye-to-eye, a visual and tactile representation of familiarity, closeness, proximity, understanding, relationship. This image is clearly (hetero)sexual: visibly and differently gendered bodies press together in the act of a kiss. Their embrace is solidly three-dimensional and though the two halves are not identical or exactly symmetrical, they make a satisfyingly perfect fit: two become as one. This idealized intimacy is characterized as 'being close' to another; as illustrated by *The Kiss*, it is an act of both touching and feeling that indicates a fusion of body and mind.

A willingness to disclose personal statements is a contemporary measure of "healthy" one is, how "emotionally honest", how "in touch" one is with one's

feelings. Both “touching” and “feeling” have multiple senses (Sedgwick 2003).⁷⁴ We can feel and touch some thing or some body in a haptic encounter (which may or may not be a sexual encounter), but we also experience intimacy extending beyond corporeal touch. That is, we equally understand “touching” and “feeling” to communicate the nebulous world of emotions: “I feel sad”, “I was touched by her kindness”. It is this latter type of touching and feeling, exceeding the corporeal, that has come to characterize modern intimacy. Jamieson has coined the term “disclosing intimacy” to describe this practice, noting it requires the mutual and routine revelation of one’s inner thoughts and feeling. As such, “[i]t is an intimacy of the self rather than an intimacy of the body, although the completeness of intimacy of the self may be enhanced by bodily intimacy” (Jamieson 1998: 1). As Jamieson’s research shows, this relatively recent public story of intimacy as disclosure is deeply imbedded in a contemporary perception of “an individual’s emotional well-being and of good relationships” (Jamieson 1998: 7). In western culture, we are inundated with demonstrations of this intimate disclosure in talk shows, reality TV and self-help manuals⁷⁵ (Blackman 2004).

The modern cultural narrative of an intimacy of disclosure has a distinct socio-spatial character, symbolized by the open arms of the embrace: “I open myself to you” and its implicit companion “I close myself to others”. The embrace as exemplified above

⁷⁴ In Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s book, *Touching Feeling*, she notes her intuition that a particular intimacy seems to subsist between textures and emotions. But the same double meaning, tactile plus emotional, is already there in the single word ‘touching’: equally it’s internal to the word ‘feeling’. I am also encouraged in this association by the dubious epithet ‘touchy-feely’, with its implication that even to talk about affect virtually amounts to cutaneous contact (Sedgwick 2003: 17).

⁷⁵ The self-help culture of magazines, Lisa Blackman suggests, is “peculiarly feminine” and leads to the “cultural production of female psychopathology” (Blackman 2004: 220)

by *The Kiss* marks the end point in a linear movement from distance (the space between you and me)

YOU ¶-----¶ ME

to proximity (being together as “us”)

¶

US

This intimacy assumes a distance covered, a space traversed to achieve a desired familiarity with another. As a vision/version of an achieved relationship (self to other), it is the antithesis of distance and as such the antidote to loneliness, unhappiness, estrangement and lack.

Within and through the rhetoric of disclosing intimacy, the space between two is filled in by knowing, until there is no empty space between (as *The Kiss* illustrates). As the knowing of each other and by implication the knowing of the self increases, distance is transformed into closeness and two become as one. In this way, intimacy engenders an “us” that is necessarily proximal and knowing and that promises a democratic encounter. Operating as a sort of personal compass, as “orientation and attachment” (Povinelli 2002: 231), intimacy allows for a bounding of the self and the

(desired) other. In this way, “modern intimacy” assumes a high level of self-awareness:

Intimacy, and personal sexual intimacy in particular, has come to be characterized by a form of pronominalized interiority. As numerous people have noted, the intimate interiority is characterized by a second-order critical reflexivity, by the I that emerges in the asking of the question, What do I feel towards you? In other words, the I who asks, What do I feel toward you? How do I desire you? contours the intimate interior. Along with being a form of orientation and attachment, intimacy is the dialectic of this self-elaboration. Who am I in relation to you? (Povinelli 2002: 231)

As demonstrated by these critical investigations of a contemporary intimacy, modern intimacy requires a coherent self that can answer such questions and offers such elaborations; an “agentic voluntarist subject” (Blackman 2004: 231). This demand of intimacy for a knowing self has converged with a heightened interest in working on the self, a process that is taken up in a number of ways, including through the practices of self-disclosure, self-help, and counselling.

Depression is popularly understood as a lack of well-being characterized by social isolation and the feelings and practice of loneliness. In a recent meditation about love, bell hooks writes: “Although we live in close contact with neighbours, masses of people in our society feel alienated, cut off, alone. Isolation and loneliness are

central causes of depression and despair” (hooks 2000: 105). The ubiquitous wisdom that “no man [sic] is an island” proclaims our human need for “togetherness” and reveals an ontological commitment to “being with” as the preferred path to well-being. In opposition to the nineteenth and early twentieth century practice of housing the mentally ill in asylums, the current belief that community care is a more inclusionary means for assisting those with mental health needs demonstrates that achieving a place of union with others, becoming part of “us”, is now perceived as a step towards well-being.⁷⁶

Intimacy is offered as an exemplar of our contemporary achievement of democracy: “Today for the first time, we are told, men and women face each other as ‘equals’, intimacy holding the potential for true ‘democracy’ not simply in the privatized domestic sphere, but also with the broader body politic” (Williams 2001: 91). The progression of knowing that the modern concept of intimacy prescribes assumes equality between individuals. That is, in the liberal humanist framework of our western culture, individuals are understood to have agency and creativity in their self-production and self-narration. Factors such as gender, race, age, bodies and economic (in)security are subsumed in a process that emphasizes the rational production and narration of ‘I’.⁷⁷ However, research indicates that such equality remains an ideal, not a reality. For example, Jamieson remarks: “The thesis that couples are increasingly centred on disclosing intimacy suggests that it is theoretically possible for a couple to bracket off the material, economic, and social

⁷⁶ Though, in fact, studies suggest that people with mental ill-health remain socially excluded even with the proximity of their communities (Milligan 1999).

⁷⁷ See Lynn Jamieson’s (1998) discussion of Tony Giddens (1992) for further development of this theme.

aspects of their relationship; whether this is theoretically possible or not, there is no clear evidence that it is happening in practice" (1998: 164). Furthermore, this ideal is in itself politically suspect. Young critiques this ideal of the "unification of particular persons through the sharing of subjectivities" as it is articulated within the project of community:

People will cease to be opaque, other, not understood, and instead become fused, mutually sympathetic, understanding one another as they understand themselves. Such an ideal of shared subjectivity, or the transparency of subjects to one another, denies difference in the sense of the basic asymmetry of subjects (Young 1990: 309).

Subjects are not so fixed, nor so wholly, freely or rationally self-producing, as Butler's treatment of subjection highlights (Butler 1997). Butler extends Foucault's theory of power to include the conscious and unconscious processes of subjection. The psychic and the social circulate in the production and reiteration of subjects such that the "I/we/us" may, in Butler's terms, exceed what is expected by the self or the social world in which that self is mutually constituted. Furthermore, as Kristeva's insight offers, we may be "strangers to ourselves" (Kristeva 1991).⁷⁸ Strangers are so, not simply because of notions of danger or risk, or because of what is not known, but because of what *will not* be known for fear of "wreck[ing] our abode" (Kristeva 1991: 1). Kristeva poses the question thus: "shall we be, intimately and subjectively,

⁷⁸ An aspect of understanding psychic reality is recognizing how we are already "other" to our selves, as Kristeva (1991) argues. In *Strangers to Ourselves*, Kristeva advances the claim that the desire to close the gates on the foreigner arises from the anxiety of facing one's own difference.

able to live with the others, to live as others, without ostracism but also without leveling?" (1991: 2).

6.3 The story of Jo: the spaces of intimacy

[Emotional well-being], it's not anymore about just being really happy. I don't expect that anymore. I think that's an unrealistic aspiration for us all to have in life just that [the modern generation] we're all going to be blissfully happy.... I think looking back a hundred years ago people just had different expectations of life there was much more disease and death and illness and hard work, people just didn't expect so much and I think, this last century we've all come to expect so much and advertising's part of that. Everybody expects this glorious pastel white life, happy families and everything happy and of course that's very disappointing 'cause life isn't like that (Jo 2003).

Jo is a slender, nervy woman, an incomer halfway through her second decade in Shetland. A business woman with young children, Jo's schedule is hectic and full and perhaps not surprisingly, her idea of well-being emphasises peace and stability, "a new way of being which is just to be quiet" (Jo 2003). Jo's philosophy for achieving that peace is to reject the blissful happiness of advertisements, a "glorious pastel white life" peopled with "happy families". She recognises modern intimacy as a public story "offering stereotypes and ideals rather than the details and contradictory complexity of real lives" (Jamieson: 159). In Jo's descriptive critique

this story presents intimations of cleanliness, transparency, and an assumption of the raced⁷⁹ nature of happiness. In this vision there are no unknown quantities, no unsightly stains. The hint of pastel colour Jo supplies is her ironic comment on intimacy as an advertising campaign, filled with calculated marketing strategies that seek to present a rosy but not too brassy vision. In Jo's view, happy families are the imaginary product of such advertising, commercial and social. Trying to match life to this image, Jo concludes, leads to disappointment, "cause life isn't like that". Nevertheless, Jo has not always held this view and she struggles to keep this perspective in place. The recent dismantling of her own family thrust her into revising her outlook:

Jo: oohh [sigh]... I suppose the life-changing moment was my husband leaving me [laughs]So, that's how I got to this point was he left me, [and I] had a very good look at myself, totally reassessed myself, my priorities and also priorities in terms of the children (Jo 2003).

The painful process of her husband leaving and so the breakdown of a central proposition of modern intimacy ("us") placed Jo outside familiar relations. She has needed to "totally reassess" herself outside of the public story of (romantic and familial, assumed to be patriarchal and reproductive) intimacy. But this reassessment is accompanied by feelings of loss. For example, as a single person, Jo has lost the invisibility of normalcy she was afforded as part of a marriage. As a single woman,

⁷⁹ For geographical explorations of the social construction of 'whiteness' see Kobayshi and Peake (1994) and Jackson (1998).

and single mother, Jo has a heightened sense of her visibility and distance from her previous status.

As Jo sketches her life as a single parent, it becomes clear that a significant consideration in her life is the proximity of her neighbours. Jo lives in a small village and, as in many Shetland communities, her home is highly visible to those who live around her. It is this very kind of proximity in rural and remote communities that is usually perceived as a benefit. Close neighbours equate to communal, neighbourly relations and for a newly single parent it might be assumed that proximate neighbours might ensure help and support with childcare. However, this is not the angle that Jo presents. For Jo, this proximity translates into a series of socio-spatial constraints on what could be termed her "private life". Contrary to any expectations of privacy, Jo's presence or absence at home is easily noted and potentially remarked upon, and so are her movements in or out of the house. During our interview, she tells an illustrative story:

Some friends went out on Friday night...and I couldn't join them. The next day, one of them popped in and told me how the evening went and the general discussion...They were talking about me which is normal, and that's just normal, discussing was I seeing anybody, was I shagging somebody... I'd been seen getting out of a man's car [outside my house] so then this discussion had ensued about was I having a relationship with this person who had given me a lift [laughs and throws up her hands] and that's just what it's like. You don't have

to do anything here to be talked about.... I wouldn't be surprised if by next week it's fact that I'm having a relationship [laughs] (Jo 2003).

The monitoring of this encounter which took place outside her home is quickly translated into gossip which just as quickly circulates back to Jo. In a small place there is a certain acceptance of this process. Speaking of another island community (Antigua), the writer Jamaica Kincaid remarks:

In a small place, people cultivate small events. The small event is isolated, blown up, turned over and over, and then absorbed into the everyday, so that at any moment it can and will roll off the inhabitants of the small place's tongues (Kincaid 1988: 52).

Indeed, Jo emphasizes the everyday nature of this attention to the small things and the inhabitants of this small place are her friends. She also conveys a wry chagrin. From her perspective, "nothing" has occurred. But, she does not have to communicate an explicit romantic intent in order to be subjected to speculation. Proximity is readily interpreted as intimacy, thus the man in the shared space of a car which is also outside her home (the heart of intimacy) is assumed to be an intimate. Friends who have no other information to confirm a romance is ensuing can still "read" this scenario as a potentially intimate encounter because of these socio-spatial arrangements. In fact, the man in question had simply given her lift home when her own car had broken down: a situation that owed more to mechanics than to ardour. Jo sums up the reason for the (mis)interpretation of this scenario:

It's the fact this was outside my house, which kind of presumably signals to the person who saw me that we'd been somewhere together which it wasn't like, it was just that I had been having all this trouble with my car... so I got a lift [laughs] (Jo 2003).

The man with the car has crossed into her personal space; a personal space which is also a highly public and monitored space. While Jo can laugh at this state of (a lack of) affairs, there are consequences. She is highly aware that any desired, intentional interactions will undergo the same scrutiny and surveillance. Any semblance of privacy is absent and she is afraid of the pressure this places on her. Jo feels that she has no space to make mistakes:

It's not like south where you could just anonymously go out with someone once or twice or once, never see him again that's the end of it. Here if you go out with somebody once you're taking on [the fact that] everybody's thinking you're together.... Now for me I don't want to go out with somebody unless I really really really like them and I would be really sure that there was something in it (Jo 2003).

The pressure of practicing intimacy in the public eye is so great that Jo is prepared to forgo the chance unless she is certain there will be "something in it". What does she mean by this phrase? She does not want to risk publicly failing at a relationship unless it is worth the risk. Unspoken, but understood, is her fear of failing again. The

loss of her relationship with her husband has brought Jo face-to-face with the fragility of modern intimacy.

Her only option for dating, she feels, is to escape the proximity of her community, but achieving the necessary distance from her highly proximal social world requires extreme action:

It would be a very difficult thing to actually go on a date with anybody secretly, unless I went south and you'd have to go even further than Edinburgh because if you try to go on a date in either Aberdeen or Edinburgh you'd bump into somebody from Shetland, so you'd be seen, if you wanted to on a [date], I'd have to go to London (Jo 2003).

Jo's description of how far she needs to go (and a trip to London is no small expense of time or money) is a reminder that the proximity of her community extends beyond her literal presence in Shetland. As part of the Shetland community, even at a distance she carries this relationship, this membership, with her.

Aside from her anxieties of finding herself in another relationship that could break down, as a newly single woman, Jo feels she must consider her reputation as a respectable woman and as a mother:

it's not longer just a case of I can do anything I want, I can just go shag a different man every week, and now, it's not like that I have three children to consider I have my neighbours watching me, I have an ex and we're not divorced so, I'm still married anyway so, chhh [shrugs] (Jo 2003).

A respectable woman and mother, by these terms, is only sexual in a limited and restricted fashion. The fact that Jo is not yet divorced means she is "still married" and thus she is still held to certain social, moral, and legal norms expected of marriage. As a resident in a small community, Jo has to consider these finer points of behaviour as she knows she and her children must face the potential repercussions of any gossip. She felt particularly sensitive to this in the first year after her break-up: "I felt very concerned about my reputation, for myself and also for my children. I didn't want people laughing at me and talking about mepeople gossip a lot around here so my reputation became very important to me" (Jo 2003). As she illustrates with her story, her reputation is at least partially determined by where and with whom she is not, as much as it is by where and with whom she is seen to be. These circumstances leave her feeling fragile and despite the proximities of her community, isolated. Her strategy is to increase her range of social contacts:

At the moment what I'm trying really hard to do is increase my social network and go out more in general and just increase my range of friends and acquaintances because y'know if I sit at home every night expecting that miraculously one day a man will be delivered to me

who is perfect in every way y'know with no, who I haven't actually got to know in any way, [laughing] it's not going to happen! (Jo 2003).

For Jo, the conversation we shared about emotional well-being was told through a recounting of her relationship breakdown and her subsequent efforts to rediscover stability, if not happiness. As a single mother, she is subject to a set of moral codes about respectability and femininity with the social spaces of her community. Her search for intimacy in the form of a love relationship is hampered by the proximity of her social community and this is not restricted to the literal spaces of Shetland. Jo's fears and anxieties about making a new relationship are compounded by the limited personal space she can operate within. While Jo to some extent accepts the boundaries of her community, she also longs for some distance from it. This distance, she feels, would give her an emotional freedom she is currently without. Instead of intimacy being a function of proximity, the proximal spaces of her community are limiting her access to a certain kind of intimacy expressed through marriage or partnership. Though Jo has concluded that "life isn't like that", she still hopes for a partner to share her life with. It is this underlying hope that makes the complications of her socio-spatial situation difficult to bear at times, because the complications may potentially limit or prevent her hope from being realized.

6.4 Facing up to Intimacy: strange(r) proximity

Judy is about to turn forty but looks closer to thirty, in marked contrast to the weather-beaten, wind-blown stereotypical image of the northern woman. Judy says

her youthful appearance is all in the skin – her mother and her grandmother had it as well. Judy describes herself as “full Shetland”. Though she now lives in Lerwick⁸⁰, she doesn’t consider herself “Lerwick”, as her mother and her father’s people both came from the south end, making them south-enders, not sooth-moothers*. This dialect word “sooth-moother” refers to those who come via the south mouth of Lerwick Harbour, the historical entry point of strangers into Shetland.⁸¹ The time she spends marking this difference to me signals how critical distinctions of place are, and, where “sooth-moother” translates to incomer, also signals how places are constituted by one’s positioning in a network of social relations⁸². Judy, in other words, is no stranger to this community.

In our conversation about emotional well-being, Judy tells me she needs to get away from Shetland regularly to keep herself healthy: “I actually like going somewhere and I know that nobody’s gonna come up and ask me something like or know who I am” (Judy 2002). She says “it can get too much” with everyone knowing her and knowing everyone. In the following interview excerpt, Judy describes her unease with being inescapably familiar:

Judy: I was meeting a couple a friends, we meet at [a local café] at half past 5 and have a pot of tea. They didn’t come and I was looking

⁸⁰ Shetland’s largest community.

⁸¹ ‘Sooth-moother’ is defined as ‘an incomer to Shetland’ in *The Shetland Dictionary* (Graham 1999). Interviewees varied in their frequency of use of Shetland dialect words. In part, this is because not all the interviewees would routinely use Shetland dialect. In part, this will have been due to Shetland speakers’ correct assumption that I would not understand most of these words. All the interviewees were fluent English speakers.

⁸² Anthropologist, Tony Cohen reports a similar significance given to genealogy as a method of mapping social knowledge on the Shetland isle of Whalsay (1987).

at me watch and thinking I'm sitting there drinking tea at [the café] on my own, how strange. And I started to feel, there's people looking at me [laughs]... they turned up about twenty minutes late and I felt really uncomfortable. If it had been anywhere else Aberdeen, Edinburgh, it wouldn't have mattered, I'd be sitting there quite happily, peace and quiet [laughs].

Deborah: so it was because people would know you as they walked by?

Judy: yeah, well once you sit in a café, mmhmm. or somebody could pop their head in and say "Judy what are you sitting there yourself for?" Somebody might say that to you (Judy 2002).

Echoing Jo's experiences, the proximate public spaces of Judy's community result in an intense visibility and this does not provide Judy with a sense of well-being. Rather, she is "really uncomfortable" and feels "strange". Paradoxically, it is precisely because she is **not** strange, because she is in fact recognisably **familiar** that she feels ill at ease. In part, this is because this meeting in this café presages different meetings in different places: "This [face-to-face] encounter is mediated; it presupposes other faces, other encounters of facing, other bodies, other spaces, and other times (Ahmed 2000: 7). Judy is aware that because she is familiar but behaving strangely (by sitting alone in a café), she may have to account for her actions (in a way she would not have to in other strange(r) places). In Goffman's

terms, she is experiencing the potential anomaly that occurs when projections are contradictory, wrongly defined or undefined. In the café scenario described by Judy, she is unable to access a “back region”, the place for contradictions and mis-takes. In the public space of the café, her performance is in continual progress.

Judy is smiling and animated and has an air of confidence, yet she wistfully confesses to an as yet unfulfilled desire for a bike:

Judy: you see I would actually love to get a really good bike.... but I just feel I'd look that stupid on it here. That's a thing I feel that what would, “what's Judy Johnson doing on that bike” y'know. I didn't have the confidence to do it. Whereas if I was somewhere I didn't really know people I'd get on the bike and off I'd go.

Deborah: yeah, you don't think you'd get on the bike and people would say “oh what a good idea Judy has” [laughs]

Judy: I don't know, I don't know, I'm thinking about it, but [laughs] that's how I feel

Deborah: uhuh, that it would stand out

Judy: y'know, people do spaek* here, y'know they talk quite a bit...
if you do something slightly different here then folks spaek about you
(Judy 2002).

Again, Judy feels unable to behave strangely. She cannot take the part of the strange(r) because she is so emphatically not strange. She conforms to what is expected of her and thus claims her place within the intimate confines of the Shetland community. But, she also describes a sense of regret, resentment and resignation at this subjection ("folks spaek about you").

People manage the impressions they give off and in this way, define and bound particular spaces so as to restrict certain types of contact that may disrupt their performances (Goffman 1969: 58). People seek to avoid such disruption, as Judy does by living without a bike, in order to eliminate uncomfortable emotions such as embarrassment or shame, or the discrediting of an individual's self-conceptions (Goffman, 1969: 219). Goffman's paradigm of recognition and misrecognition offers a close look at complex interactions and lends some insight into why Judy feels so uncomfortable in these situations. In the case of the café, she is on stage but without the correct props (the friends who are late for tea). Her performance is disrupted and she has no means to control the feared misperceptions of her audience who will misrecognize her as alone in a café. Lest Judy seems overly sensitive or self-regulatory about the views of people where she has after all lived most of her life, I too found, even as a temporary and transient visitor, that the high street was a journey that required a heightened sense of alertness. Anyone could be encountered,

anyone could be familiar and thus certain obligations could be necessarily enacted.

On my third visit to Shetland I noted the following:

That winding narrow high street walk is like walking the plank, all eyes on you. I forgot how palpable that noticing is. I am standing out as the unfamiliar and feel my strangeness. I am touched by their eyes, their altered postures, seeing my strangeness (Fieldnotes: April 30, 2004).

Facing up to others in such close proximity does not lead to a comfortable intimacy, even though the amount of known information shared between two or more parties may be increased. What is less easily measured, of course, is the self-knowledge held by any one participant in a social encounter.

Judy offers one strategy for managing the demands of such daily encounters. Judy maintains an intimate relationship with a friend far outside her community. This allows her to stay in place, without sacrificing her need for confidences, or testing the limits of a tightly bounded "tight-knit" community. Though Judy herself doesn't make this connection explicitly, her relationship with a life-long pen pal who lives overseas struck me as a very effective way both of "getting away" from Shetland, and the associated visibility of its proximal spaces, and getting around the issue of trust. Although Judy later notes she has a "best friend" in Shetland, and also describes herself as telling most things to her partner, she describes this long-distance friendship as something just for her, something private. Describing the relationship,

Judy comments: I know that she tells me things and she trusts me with, she has done quite a lot, specially with difficulties in her life and I've done the same back to her so, I do feel that I do know her (Judy 2002). The two women have shared 32 years of letters, in a time when emails offer instant gratification. Judy says she has kept every one.

As aware as she is of the limitations of living where everyone knows you, Judy strategically expands her capacity for intimacy by stretching her relations beyond the limits of the community's purview. This relationship is an effective vehicle for practicing an intimacy without the obstacles that the small community engenders. Judy's choice of a geographically distant friend does not match the cosy familiarity promised by the rural idyll, nor does it match the expectations of intimacy as proximal. Instead, Judy's example suggests a more complex picture, one in which the apparent social cohesion of a small community is strongly supported by networks which extend both outwith that community and within the self.

6.5 The practice of intimate distance

Helen is a petite woman whose stance nevertheless conveys height. In one of our many conversations, she asked me about how it was to be tall and it was only then that I understood her to be not tall. This height discussion, carried out in a little café, over steaming cups of tea, sparked a conversation about things we perceived men to be threatened by in women: height, education, feminism, strength. Reading over the fieldnotes of this conversation after Helen's later interview, I freshly understood the significance of this exchange, why she has developed a way of standing, of looking

taller than she is. Helen chooses the interview encounter, and our discussion about emotional well-being, as the space to tell me about the physical abuse she suffered at the hands of her father:

My father was an alcoholic and he was an exceedingly violent man and my mother would never get the police to him, she would say I'll get the police to you but she would never actually tackle it. This is in an era before counselling and this when I was a teenager....I was back as a student when I was 21 and I got really badly beaten up, I mean I was locked out a the house and I got really really badly beaten up. And I got to a neighbour's which was my usual bolthole. There's not refuge then, so y'know you find a safe house and my father was just ballistic so I went to a neighbours' house and uh [sighs] got there and my friend's father said y'know we're not going to tolerate this you will call the police....[M]y mother had followed me and we sat there and y'know I'm black and blue and [she] said you are doing no such thing you are not calling the police and my friend's father said she's gonna call the police, something really terrible is gonna happen here (Helen 2002).

Though her mother protested, Helen did make the call. Then, as now, petitioners on this island must wait for an officer to travel from one of the other islands, so Helen's encounter with the law occurred the next day. When Helen stated the facts of her

father's abuse to this figure, she was the one who received the punishment – a reprimand from the officer for daring to flout the authority of her father:

I was mortified, I mean I couldn't believe that this was happening. I'd suffered physical abuse since I was a child and the policeman told me that. I couldn't believe what I as hearin that it was my fault that I upset my father. And I said I want to press charges, and he said "you're not pressing charges, you instigated this" and, so I was told in no uncertain terms that I was a stropky student...and I should not have been talkin to my father disrespectfully (Helen 2002).

During the interview, some twenty years later, Helen shrugs away this moment with a terse "he was friends with my father".

Next, Helen's mother was severely beaten and required a doctor's attention.

[She] phoned the doctor who had heard that I'd called the police probably the doctor's receptionist who said put your daughter on I want to hear what's really goin on and I said well y'know I've done my bit I called the police and nobody'll back me. She said ok, we'll see about that... and obviously [had] gone and spoken to the doctor who called the police. And the police had come down and spoken to my father and this time it was like, y'know they obviously had to say to him..., y'know to the effect of this couldn't go on (Helen 2002).

Her father's eventual confrontation with the police officer was the consequence of a number of encounters: the neighbour's advice and support for Helen; the doctor's receptionist asking Helen about the nature of her mother's injuries and her information that Helen had called the police the previous week; the receptionist bringing her knowledge of the situation to the attention of the local doctor; the doctor's conversation with the officer.

He never hit one of us again, y'know but that took, y'know when I initially presented the problem I was, although I'd years of it, year and years and years and years, ah, it's like as soon as I stepped outside the family and broke with the rule, and, certainly the community it, the community policeman [was] down on me like a ton of bricks for daring to do this (Helen 2002).

Helen's story highlights the politics of a repressive intimacy and the practicing of a potentially dangerous distance in a small community. The actions of the various people in her story confirm the standard notion, and echoes Judy's experience, that in a small community everyone knows everyone, and will mind everyone's business, while purporting to mind their own. However, the perception of finding safety in community (Bauman 2001) is muddled by Helen's experience. Instead, her story clearly indicates the ways in which power may be enacted to maintain (the police officer) or to transcend (the receptionist via the doctor) gendered social relations in this isolated island community. This dynamic is ever further nuanced. Such a socially proximate network of people demonstrates a particularly mobile type of intimacy that

does not simply equate with well-being. This intimacy depends on a complexity of (open) secrets and (knowing) lies within a proximal distance. The mobilization of these strategies, employed variously by the police officer, the doctor, the receptionist, Helen's mother, father and Helen herself, have numerous effects. They ensure the continued performance of intimacy as an assumed precondition to a successful community; they disguise the failure of an ideal intimacy built on disclosure amongst equals; and they suggest how disclosures can operate in unequal ways resulting in and affecting the circulation of power, knowledge, and emotions.

6.6 The politics of intimacy and difference

This I and its labor with an other provide the micropragmatic architecture out of which We-the-People and other mass subjects unfold (Povinelli 2002: 232).

The versions of intimacy that bring people together in the "micropragmatic architecture" of "us", whether as "two-who-become-one" or as or as a community of "We-the-People" rest on three significant and related assumptions: that intimacy is democratic, that it is invisibly gendered (unmarked), and that it is a conscious process. That intimacy is none of these is supported by the empirical material presented in this chapter. Intimacy can be extended beyond the usual coordinates of "inner", "close" and/or "felicitous" spaces (Bachelard 1994 [1958]). This move is an "abandoning [of] the fiction of natural space" (Callon and Law 2004: 3) with its assumptions of correct positions and fixed opposites, and a taking up of a more fluid

process. Intimacy as distance, intimacy as difference, offers a flexible intimacy, reflecting the ambivalent and elastic spatialities of women's emotional landscapes.

Judy, Jo and Helen's narratives about emotional well-being and the ways in which they negotiate and perform intimacy in the particular setting of the Shetland Isles offer some alternative readings to both modern intimacy and the presumed intimacy of the rural and remote locale. It is my contention here that the story of intimacy as equalling a democratic proximity can be unsettled by their particular and some times contradictory experiences of being in the world.

Intimacy seems to offer the familiarity and warmth of close association. However, an examination of the spatialities of "modern" intimacy reveals the limits of its contribution to well-being and unsettles assumptions about intimacy and its relation to proximity and distance. Spatialities of intimacy are revealed as not simply about the closeness of "us" in polarized opposition to a strange(r) distance. The intimacies of our daily lives are not the product of a linear movement from distance to proximity, as a modern reading of intimacy would have it. However, intimacy is a spatial affair. As the above examples demonstrate, psychic, social, and spatial relations ensure that distance and proximity can co-exist and may be configured in complex ways as we engage in our lives. Intimacy is also not simply the prerequisite for well-being as the popular story of intimacy suggests, but it is part of people's experiences. The practices of intimacy, itself a paradoxical affair, engage unequal and gendered subjects – the Jos, Judys or Helens who participate in and negotiate their intimate emotional landscapes – and these engagements may produce

ambivalent consequences, as well as positive affects. Considering the practices of intimacy with an awareness of the ways in which “we” can be both knowing and unknowing, the ways in which “we” are gendered and placed works to de-fuse the “us” of modern intimacy. Instead, more complex and elastic experiences of intimacy are discussed and the spatialities of intimacy are redrawn.

6.7 Conclusion

Women’s narratives about emotional well-being and the ways in which they negotiate and perform intimacy in the particular setting of the Shetland Isles offer some alternative accounts to these models. These accounts suggest that the lived relationship of intimacy to proximity to well-being is more complex than these models of intimacy promise. Drawing these accounts together with some feminist visions of difference, I examine some of the politics that underlay intimacy. I wish to question intimacy as the democratic and mutual disclosures of knowing selves because this is the version that many of us compare our lives to, even if we do not or cannot practice it (Jamieson 1998; Blackman 2004). This intimacy implicitly assumes the coming together of selves that are constant, stable, self-enclosed; selves that are gendered only in that the feminine forms the other half of the masculine same (two become one); selves that are both knowing and known at the opposite end of the line to anonymity’s unknown stranger. *The Kiss* is only able to project the solidity of two as one within this masculinist rhetoric of constancy and equality. As has been written about the desire for (certain kinds of) community, it is “the extrusion of alterity, in order to bask in the warm glow of self-confirming homogeneity” (Morley 2001: 441). I wish to suggest that intimacy must necessarily

incorporate alterity. As Irigaray argues elsewhere (1996), love must resist fusion. If intimacy is understood to involve unstable and/or strange selves “as others”, it can be read differently such that distance does not separate in the same way, and neither does proximity (simply) bind. In fact, perhaps strangers are known after all⁸³ and intimacy can stretch any amount⁸⁴, like the body in a yoga practice. These different intimacies matter when it comes to considering how we operate in place: how we are differently gendered, how we place our relationships, how we think through them, enact them and desire them to be. I conclude by considering how intimacy might be stretched to a third ontological mode: “to live *as others*, without ostracism but also without levelling” (Kristeva 1991: 2). This revisioning explores an alternative, elastic model of intimacy which incorporates our intimate distances.

⁸³ See Ahmed (2000: 55) who argues: “the stranger is some-body we know as not knowing, rather than some-body we simply do not know.”

⁸⁴ Consider, for example, the virtual, technological intimacies explored by some social and spatial theorizing (Licoppe 2004; Urry 2004) and the impact of the virtual on ‘encounters with alterity’ (Morley 2001: 439).

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have explored geographies of emotion. I have demonstrated the deeply spatial nature of emotional subjects – subjects who take place ‘in-relation-to’ both (gendered) selves and (gendered) spaces. By drawing theoretical and substantive attention to women’s experiences of emotional well-being in Shetland, the thesis extends understandings of the intersections between gender, geography, and emotion. By focusing on relationality the thesis endeavours to recognise the elastic links between us (i.e. the relations *between* difference, difference *as* relationship). This recognition requires a movement beyond notions of ‘human entity’ as simply the bounded thinking subject. By exemplifying intersubjectivity in practice, “*in situ*” (Probyn 2003), the thesis demonstrates how distance and proximity overlap in productive ways, enacting the intimate distances of self-other spatial relations. In this way, this thesis adds to the currently minimal treatments of the

spatialities of emotion and so contributes to the nascent field of emotional geographies.

This conclusion begins with a review of the thesis in order to draw out the overarching substantive and theoretical issues that thread through the chapters. The next section reflects, in light of the empirical chapters, on some key theoretical issues raised in Chapter Two. This reflection attends to the challenges of theorising the shifting terrain of emotional geographies, focusing in particular on theorising intimacy and its relationship to well-being. The third section of this conclusion reflects back on analytical issues raised in Chapter Three, including silences and resistance in research encounters. I close with a discussion of an agenda for future research into emotional geographies.

7.1 A Review of the Thesis

I began this thesis by contextualising my choice to focus on women's experiences of emotional well-being in Shetland. To reiterate briefly, the project grew from a combination of scholarly and lived experiences of rural, remote and northern women's health (broadly, and non-medically speaking) and from the recognition of a lack of research pertaining to such experiences. From the outset, my thesis has been fundamentally and philosophically influenced by my emotional/intellectual/political commitment to a feminist project. For me, this can be summed up as seeking to make space for women's experiences and multiple ways of being, so as to extend understandings of gender relations and gendered identities. By making space for these narratives about women's emotional well-being, this thesis addresses a gap in

scholarly literature. In soliciting a diverse group of women's perceptions and experiences of emotional well-being (drawing attention to both individual situated accounts and acknowledging commonalities across such accounts), this thesis also contributes to revisioning the negatively conceived relationship between women and emotion.

The ideological underpinnings of the project, together with the substantive focus on women's emotional well-being in Shetland generated some specific theoretical problematics. As a geographer, I sought to understand the context of Shetland in terms of a "meeting place" (Massey 1997: 322) and so to consider the dynamics of social and spatial distances and proximities. To consider women's social, spatial and psychic landscapes, I had to have a theoretical grasp of gender and its relationship(s) to identity. Finally, to theorise accounts of emotional well-being, I needed to consider the ways and means of thinking through and substantively investigating the spatialities of emotion. Chapter Two's three-part structure addressed these distinct but overlapping theoretical materials. The first section considered distances and proximities by closely examining constructs of rurality, theories of encounter in proximal spaces, and the nature of psycho-social boundaries. As the ensuing discussion suggested, experiences of place involve a complex set of processes incorporating psycho-social dimensions. In the second section, I came to theoretical terms with gender, emphasising feminist, psychoanalytically-inspired, and post-structuralist theorisations of relationality, difference, and the intimate distances of being *autonomous-in-relation-to*. I proposed that such attention allows for the shifting, political and paradoxical nature of gendered identities which always take

place *in situ* (Probyn 2003). In the final section, I reviewed a set of approaches to the spatialities of emotion. I argued for a continued attention to geographies of emotion which incorporate the inseparability of intersubjectivity within our social and spatial encounters. Drawing together feminist poststructuralist insights about subjection, relationality, and the gendered spaces of emotion, I concluded with the figure of the emotional subject. In place of other metaphors, the emotional subject highlights the fundamental importance of emotion to understanding and hence to experiencing and communicating our relational sense of self – to locating our subjectivity within a “geographical sensibility” (Anderson and Smith 2001). This process of theorising geographies of emotional well-being resulted in a theoretical framework sustained by the concept of relationality.

I had several epistemological and methodological considerations to assess in order to successfully conduct research that would illuminate how women in Shetland describe, manage, and maintain emotional well-being. In Chapter Three, I explored these considerations, thinking through the processes and politics of my research choices. Looking back, this chapter dealt with three overarching and interrelated concerns: politics, processes and practices. In terms of politics, I discussed the potential tensions within ‘researcher-researched’ relations. These included researchers’ anxieties over naming, defining and ‘giving voice’ to research participants. A particular feminist anxiety surrounds holding too much power, or more power than research participants, while wishing to give power to those participants. An exploration of these dynamics suggested that power is not so simply exercised and various psychic, social, or political agendas can intervene. Later in the

chapter, I discussed my deliberate choice to not name a respondent, contra the usual feminist imperative to do so.

In considering process, I explored the ethical contours of interpersonal encounters, drawing in particular on the psychoanalytically inspired scholarship of feminist geographers Liz Bondi (2003) and Gillian Rose (1997). Building on their work, I made a case for attending to silences in research encounters. I also described how researching emotional well-being led not only to discussions of emotion, but also to expressions of emotion within the spaces of the interviews and elsewhere. This led me to consider the interpersonal dynamics of an ethnographic style of research (an ongoing problematic, even when the research is, in essence, finished). Finally, in terms of practice, I outlined my qualitative research design and detailed the different feminist and ethnographic methods I employed (i.e. interviews) or abandoned (i.e. network maps) during the course of the research.

The substantive chapters of the thesis presented empirical material to demonstrate the profound and inseparable links between the places we move within, and how we are moved emotionally. I focused in Chapter Four on Shetland's social, cultural, and gendered geographies, applying a feminist geographic perspective to interview and fieldnote material. I sought not only to foreground the ways in which gender and place are integral to accounts of well-being in Shetland, but also to emphasise that this does not happen in fixed or static ways. The discussion of Up-Helly-Aa, for example, identified some particularly gendered subjectivities which are mobilised in differing ways, depending on the situated locations of those engaging with the annual festival.

In Chapter Five, I turned to an explicit look at the various concepts of emotional well-being as offered by the participants in this study. As detailed in Chapter Five, a number of important aspects of well-being were identified. Women emphasised the importance of feeling balanced, feeling whole, and their general need to ‘make sense’ of themselves. In the frequent references to balance and to achieving wholeness, the interviewees touched on popular contemporary discourses of holistic health wherein the goal is self-integration and synthesis leading to contentment. This emphasis on the self-oriented management of well-being also reflects a liberal social vision within which autonomous individuals are assumed to be free to make choices about their life circumstances. Such accounts highlight the relationship between a process of making sense of the self and a sense of well-being.

Chapter Five also addressed the important theme of boundaries. Boundaries were evoked as a method of both enclosing and disclosing emotional material. Keeping emotional material enclosed was understood to be unhealthy and “letting it out” was perceived as a measure of well-being. For example, Linda referred to Shetlanders as “self-contained” and explained that such containment was less about community cohesion and more about the suppression of difference, with negative consequences for people’s emotional well-being. Helen and Nancy also used metaphors of enclosure to suggest a lack of emotional well-being. In each case, the interviewees referred to disclosure as the antidote to keeping negative feelings “in” (bounded within the self). Again this reflects an assumption that people can self-monitor, freely choosing what they will enclose or disclose. Those interviewees who work in counselling arenas noted that therapeutic spaces also advocate disclosure. In

comparison to the emphasis on individual disclosure, therapeutically facilitated disclosure takes place in a simultaneously more open and more bounded space. That is, clients are encouraged to disclose within the therapeutic space of encounter, which paradoxically functions as a temporary, safe enclosure.

Despite the expression of themes of self-management in narratives about emotional well-being, an analysis of the respondents' accounts pointed to a more relational development of emotional well-being. Stories of place within interview discussions demonstrated ways in which self and place are mutually constituted. Both local residents and incomers to Shetland evoked their relationships to place in their efforts to articulate a sense of emotional well-being. Lynn, an incomer of many years, described her emotional well-being as resulting from a complex set of relations between her distance from her birthplace, her feelings of distance within Shetland, and the social flexibility she is afforded as a consequence of these spatialities. Another group of interviewees described their experiences of depression as significantly linked to their sense of place, and more specifically, their sense of taking up a place in Shetland. Their narratives suggest the forming of psychic landscapes which entail relationships between self and place. Their accounts highlight the geographies of emotional well-being – the overlapping spaces, psychic, social, and literal, that we inhabit in our emotional worlds.

Chapter Six examined the relational nature of well-being through an in-depth analysis of three particular accounts of intimacy. In the tradition of a qualitative ethnographic style of research, these specific instances were used to illustrate more

general points from which careful generalisations can be made. These accounts demonstrated how we live 'in relation to', and that this relational process deeply affects and defines our sense of emotional well-being. In Jo's interview, she described her experience of living as a recently single woman in a small village. Jo found that the proximal spaces of her community impinged on her efforts to realise an intimate relationship. She felt constrained by the perceived and actual attention of her neighbours as she moved around her community. Part of Jo's anxiety stemmed from her comparison of her life as it currently is with an ideal form of intimacy, within which she would be half of a partnership ("us").

Also in Chapter Six, Judy, a Shetlander with several generations of family history behind her, offered an account of the intensely proximate spaces of her daily life. Judy described how she is so familiar within the intimate confines of Shetland that she feels unable to express herself differently. This negatively affects her sense of well-being, leaving her feeling frustrated and constrained. Her strategy for relieving this pressure is to get away from Shetland whenever she can – she does this both literally, by going away to other locations, and through her relationship with an overseas pen-pal. Helen, another Shetlander, offered an historical account of domestic violence which challenges assumptions about intimacy on both interpersonal and community levels. At the interpersonal level, the notion that such closeness results in warmth and familiarity is shattered by the abuse she is subjected to within her family. The presumed safety and cohesion of intimacy on a community level is similarly confounded in the face of community relations that, in Helen's story, function to disguise and facilitate her abuse.

7.2 Theoretical Reflections

I would like to make some general comments about lessons learned in the process of theorising geographies of emotional well-being. The concept of emotional well-being was readily taken up by the participants in this study (whether in formal interviews or more informal conversations). In Chapter Five I identified a series of common themes which the interviewees drew on explicitly in their accounts of emotional well-being. This ready recognition and common access to a language of emotional well-being suggests a socio-cultural awareness of talking about contemporary emotional practices. This very familiarity with discourses of emotional well-being generates certain questions with theoretical implications. Namely, if people are referencing familiar contemporary models of emotional well-being, are they reflecting their individual experiential knowledge or are they simply reproducing dominant socio-cultural constructions about emotional well-being (constructions which may serve a dominant order, but not individual women)? Furthermore, are these two kinds of knowledge mutually exclusive, and if not, what is the relationship between them? The answer, at least to the first question is, as Nancy Chodorow (1999) would say, "both/and". That is, in demonstrating knowledge of common understandings of emotional well-being, the respondents in this study are participating in the reiteration of contemporary culture, but inextricable from that are the ways in which their personal psycho-social biographies influence their participation in, disengagement from, or excess to the normative practice. For example, decisions about keeping in (enclosing) or letting out (disclosing) emotional material were seen by most respondents as significantly affecting emotional well-being. Enclosing emotions was universally represented as unhealthy, while

disclosing feelings was advocated. As described in Chapter Five, Nancy advocated bringing painful feelings to the surface, particularly through a process of “voicing” her feelings, but also described her pattern of retreating within a metaphorical outer barrier in response to more “difficult” and “personal” matters. I would argue that the simultaneous recognition and contradiction of discourses of emotional well-being demonstrates the dynamic, complex processes of intersubjectivity.

Another lesson learned in theorising emotional well-being is in recognising the important ways in which emotional well-being is experienced spatially. As the discussion of enclosure and disclosure suggests, emotional well-being is frequently spoken of in spatial terms. In addition to such metaphorical spaces evoked by discussions of emotional well-being, several respondents also made an explicit link between their emotional well-being and their experience of place. In Chapter Five, I detailed Lynn’s discussion of her shifting feelings in relationship to her home of origin and her home as an incomer in Shetland. Lynn described how her emotional well-being is linked to her sense of a comfortable distance from local “feeling rules” (Hochschild 2003) . While she feels she has a distinct place within the Shetland community, she also feels she has a freedom to be who she wants to be because she is not bound by a community knowledge of who she should be – a knowledge she ascribes to her place of origin and which she is happy to be at a distance from. Related to this, other incomer interviewees described their experiences of depression and expressed a shared feeling that the move to Shetland had helped to alleviate their depression. The spatial ways in which emotional well-being is expressed, practiced

and managed signal the importance of developing a theoretical framework which attends to such spatialities.

In Chapter Six, I focused on intimacy. Practices of intimacy as described by participants, demonstrably affected well-being, whether by eliciting feelings of well-being through the presence of intimacy or by negatively affecting well-being through intimacy's absence. However, theorising intimacy proved to be a complicated task. In my analysis of intimacy as a theme arising from participant interviews, I identified two overlapping experiences of intimacy – an interpersonal intimacy and experiences of intimacy within the community. These two types of intimacy as detailed by respondents are substantively different, but I argued they have a “family resemblance” (Wittgenstein 1953) at a philosophical level. Both of these models of intimacy are charged (in the sense of infused) with a masculinist ideal. That is, they are based in liberal western assumptions about equity and personal freedom, with the consequence that gender and other power differentials are rendered invisible. This presumption of equal (i.e. neutral) ground occurs both at the level of interpersonal intimacy between two, and at the level of proximate social encounters within a non-urban, geographically distant community. In each case, a social premise exists: that we can know each other in straightforward, conscious ways, moving from distanced individuals to a proximate state of ‘us’.

In Chapter Six, I explicitly questioned the popular contemporary version of intimacy as the democratic and mutual disclosures of knowing selves. From my post-structural feminist perspective, I argued that intimacy is not simply the product of a linear

movement from distance to proximity because we do not and cannot know one another in such straightforward or conscious ways. I argued for a more elastic understanding of intimacy – an understanding that stretches intimacy to encompass multiple others instead of seeking fusion. But, as respondents' accounts indicated, intimacy as the achievement of proximity ("us") is the version that many of us compare our lives to, and invest emotional energy in, and desire to obtain, even if we are unable to achieve this (Jamieson 1998; Blackman 2004). This points to tensions between intimacy as an ideal, and intimacy as it is practiced. Furthermore, at least *two* ideals of intimacy are at work here: the popular vision of intimacy as happy union ("us") and my Irigaray-inspired vision of intimacy as the enactment of *autonomy-in-relation-to*. I will address each of these in turn.

I featured Jo's account as one of three narratives about intimacy in Chapter Six. In Jo's account, tensions emerge between individual and relational accounts of intimacy when the ideal of a private union is contrasted with the public ordeal of dating in a small community. Jo is a savvy single mother seeking to engage in a new, post-separation relationship. In her interview about emotional well-being, she described feeling both exposed and isolated in her efforts to develop romantic relationships. The exposure results from her extreme visibility in a proximate community which affords her very little privacy. She feels acutely aware that any fledgling relationships will be microscopically observed. Her isolation is made manifest in her anxiety about managing the distance between what she can share/do/say in public (without causing her or her kids' possible alienation from their community) and what she is feeling. At least part of what she is feeling is the desire for a partner and though she jokes about

the impossibility of finding someone she is actively seeking to expand her social network in hopes of doing just that.

These tensions give weight to my argument that the intimacies of our daily lives are not simply the product of a linear movement from distance to proximity, as a contemporary reading of intimacy would have it. But these tensions also suggest we may feel contradictory and ambivalent desires for this vision, regardless of our chances for success, or our politics. Intimacy may not *simply* be the prerequisite for well-being as the popular story of intimacy suggests, but it does intertwine with emotional well-being in complex ways. The practices of intimacy engage unequal and gendered subjects and these engagements may produce ambivalent consequences, including the desire for intimacy as a function of proximity.

My analysis of intimacy was influenced by Luce Irigaray's philosophical vision of difference (Irigaray 1993; 1993 [1985]; 1996; 2000). Inspired by Irigaray, I look towards a feminist politics that makes use of difference, not as the other of the same (i.e. binary oppositions such as 'theory/practice' and 'subject/object') but as relational, intersubjective. This has been a vital argument for feminism because women are otherwise held to the knife-edge of otherness. If we are body, we cannot be mind.⁸⁵ If we are black, we cannot be white. If we are emotion, we cannot be reason. Irigaray's politics do not attempt to suppress or dismiss polarities, but do

⁸⁵ As A.S. Byatt (2004) recently pointed out in an essay on feeling brains and thinking bodies, this neatly eliminates the possibility of an intellectual woman.

seek to examine the 'communicative relationship'⁸⁶ that exists between and within such shifting polarities. There is a resonance with Adrienne Rich's time-honoured idea of a lesbian continuum (Rich 1981). Such approaches maintain tensions while acknowledging difference (see also Bondi and Davidson 2003 as they 'trouble' the place of gender on a similar premise). For women, subjected in so many ways, this acknowledging of multiplicity, fluidity and dynamism is critical. Conceiving of gender as a mobile set of relational geographies illustrates the intimate interplay between psychic, social and spatial distances and proximities. Understanding practices of intimacy as demonstrating relationship emphasises that how we live 'in relation to' deeply affects and defines our sense of emotional well-being. Living 'in-relation-to' at the most basic level speaks to intimate distances that inscribe relationships of self to other (whether the other is part of the self, another person, a thing, or a place).

In this thesis, I built a theoretical framework around the concept of relationality. Relationality is a much vaunted model for feminist theorising, utilised precisely because it opens up the idea of fixed identities and fixed relations and instead suggests 'we' and the parameters of 'we-ness' are fluid, dynamic, and continually (re)situated. In this theoretical frame, place is about more than a fixed set of geographical coordinates. Gender is about more than biology or predetermined social roles, and instead encompasses the relationships between a set of hierarchical, socially constructed subject positions and the dynamic subjectivities that may be expressed by individual women and men. Gender, as both Haraway and Irigaray

⁸⁶ Writing of the communicate relationship, Benjamin describes it as a 'dialogue that recognizes the other' (1998: xv). Ultimately, this dialogue leads not to synthesis, but to difference (Benjamin, 1998: 108).

have argued, is a mode of alterity; it expresses the *relationship* between one and another (and that other does not exclude the self) and the mobile and sometimes ambivalent psycho-social boundaries that inform this relationship. In this model, intimacy is not an individual practice, but a relational one. In retrospect, it is clear the emphasis on intimacy as relational is also partly the consequence of my own ideals about intimacy, ideals which sit in tension with the kind of ideal intimacy referenced in Jo's account (which in turn, sit in tension with Jo's experiences).

7.3 Analytical Reflections

There is little empirical evidence available to demonstrate women's experiences of emotional well-being. In Chapter Three I discussed the various epistemological and methodological decisions I made in order to conduct research that would illuminate how women in Shetland describe, manage, and maintain emotional well-being and so add some empirical material to this developing research area. These considerations included thinking through the politics of my research choices (like renaming and in one case re-gendering a participant); attending to the interpersonal dynamics of an ethnographic style of research (an ongoing problematic, even when the research is, in essence, finished); and developing an analytical framework for my data. It is this last process that I want to reflect on in more detail here.

In this research, I engaged in interviews and participant-observation and these methodologies produced a considerable quantity of data. I approached the analysis of this data in two distinct ways. First, I identified and explored themes that came out of

the entire set of (mostly individual) interview transcripts and fieldnotes. This allowed me to consider commonalities and connections between respondents and their experiences. Secondly, I considered individual narratives. This made space for disconnection: accounts that didn't 'fit' with other experiences and understandings. In this attention to both generalised themes and particularised narratives, I attended to how senses of emotional well-being happen, as Probyn (2003) says, "in situ" – both embodied in individuals and embedded in social contexts. The use of these two different emphases in the analysis of the material resulted in some tensions and contradictions in outcomes. General agreement on themes important to emotional well-being was sometimes contradicted by individual experience. For example, a contradiction is exposed between a general agreement about the positive outcomes of speaking about feelings, and the more complex and ambivalent experience Helen manages in her confrontation with socially sanctioned domestic violence. Such contradictions signal the complexity of re-presenting research material.

These contradictions are not easily told, especially in this doctoral format where the push is towards producing a coherent narrative. How do you relate people's narratives in a manner that is true to the shifting complexities of people's stories and lives? As I indicated in Chapter Three, narratives are an inescapable part of personal accounts, but highlighting narratives can also create a false sense of coherence. Contradictions and the layering of detail over time are smoothed over and so rendered invisible when a (particular) story is told. For example, in Chapter Six, when I discuss Helen's experiences, I allude to how I understood her differently after hearing more of her story in a later meeting. But, I do not explore in any depth how

her 'story' is a function of more than one encounter with me and nor do I emphasize that her story results from more than one representation of events.

This problematic aspect of combining a poststructural attention to multiplicity and difference with the complications of empirical research has not dampened my passionate enthusiasm for theoretical models of subjectivity and intersubjectivity, such as is found in the inspiring philosophical and creative work of Irigaray, nor for fieldwork. It has led me back to the importance of methodological innovation. In Gibson-Graham's work on mining communities (Gibson-Graham 1994) they propose a mode of action research, calling for participants to be co-researchers. The practicalities of such a collaborative project are daunting, and, I think, difficult to mesh with the expectations and time frame of a doctoral project. But, in my plans for ongoing research into women's emotional well-being, I would like to try to expand my methodologies in this way. Historically, action research has been about a politics of empowerment. I am not suggesting a return to this motive (which has had a paternalistic agenda of 'giving something back' to research subjects). Rather, I am interested in how a method can 'surface' multiple voices and so more accurately reflect intersubjectivity, and produce a necessarily less seamless understanding of interpersonal relations.

I also continue to see the importance of reflexivity. As a researcher investigating emotion, I was highly aware of my own emotional resonances throughout the research. I illustrated with fieldnote excerpts in Chapter Three how emotions, mine and others, become inextricably caught up in the process of my research via

interpersonal relationships. Research centred on interpersonal encounters, whether as manifested in interviews, as an aspect of participant observing in the community, or as a feature of people's musings about emotional well-being, cannot escape these tensions. It is clear to me that the ways in which I practiced and/or enacted empathy and understanding; my intended, unintended choices and actions; my responses, whether of pleasure, excitement, boredom, discomfort or distaste; the ways I interpreted and recorded these understandings and responses – all of these affective factors influenced this project. The question is how best to draw from this in a useful, ethical fashion. One way I sought to practice this was by maintaining contact with research participants following the formal fieldwork periods. Receiving and making phonecalls, emails and visits provided me with embodied reminders of the participants' complexity and changing attitudes, feelings or situations, rather than fixing them in time, as static artefacts of a research process.

In Chapter Three, I reflected on the methodological implications of silences in research encounters. I considered how silences may signal an exercise of power ('I choose not to speak to you') or a lack of power ('I am unable to speak to you'). I considered whether such silences could be understood as unperformed (speech) potential, or if the silences might be 'heard' as unconscious communication. In only two interviews out of twenty-three, did respondents explicitly ask for my silence, in that they asked to have something struck from the record. But, other interviewees used silence in ways which were not always interpretable. For example, in one notably quiet interview, Mary offered minimal responses to my questions throughout. While I attempted various conversational strategies to hear more from

her, she did not meet me in this goal. I pondered various explanations –Was she disinterested in my research project? Had I annoyed or offended her in some way? As the interview limped along, I could not ascertain if her silence was related to the content of the discussion, my unaccustomed presence in her home, or inspired by matters entirely unrelated to this researcher or research project. In the absence of answers to these questions, I experienced Mary's silence as uncomfortably resistant to my research agenda.

Some of the silences in the thesis are deliberate. For example, silences cluster around confidential interview material and protect some aspects of the personal relationships that grew out of, and/or were affected by my research. One rationale for these silences reflects ethical concerns about confidentiality and a desire to avoid sensationalising highly sensitive material. In particular, this is the case where an account of domestic violence was offered outside of a formal interview setting. The silence is also a measure of respect, in some cases, for developed and ongoing interpersonal relationships, and a desire on my part to deliberately hold some exchanges out of the research spotlight. Looking back, I can see how this last concern signals a certain unwillingness on my part to expose the fallible person I might be in my multiple roles of researcher, incomer, foreigner, social companion, friend. Here, I can identify my own resistance to being written about, even as I write about others.

The most important point, in this retrospective discussion of silences is simply that silences took place throughout the research. Despite my methodological interest in

silences expressed in Chapter Three, my substantive chapters give little empirical weight to examples such as my interview with Mary. The fact that these reflections come here, in my conclusions, reveals the gap between my methodological intent and the ultimate analysis of my interviews. My privileging of the spoken portion of interviews reflects a wider tendency in social research to value the tangible over the intangible – in this case, the recorded words over the recorded silences. If acknowledged, silences remind us that what we capture in words and text can only tell part of a story. Silences may demonstrate the exercise of various forms of resistance. Silences, if attended to, can point to places where our understandings may be incomplete, places where ideas, experiences, inklings, might be *felt* if not yet articulated – a project certainly important to research on emotion. This is a lesson learned for future analysis.

7.4 Agenda for Future Research

At the start of this thesis, I made the point that analyses of emotion are rife in fiction, but rare in scholarship. In view of the significance that emotions hold for us daily, this is a notable omission. As literature reminds us, the examples of our emotional geographies are endless, and endlessly spatial. Looking over the thesis as a whole, I can conclude both theoretically and practically that emotional-well-being is profoundly spatial. It is also clear that constructs of place (such as rurality and boundaries) and issues of gender (such as who has, holds, or withholds emotional material) affect senses of emotional well-being and thus matter for women's mental health, and health more generally. While the thesis ends here, the implications of

these conclusions are taking shape in an agenda for future research into emotional geographies. In this final section, I suggest some directions for this ongoing study.

A significant theme in my respondents' accounts of emotional well-being was the issue of depression. Depression is a critical issue for women. According to some statistics, twice as many women as men will experience some form of depression. Depression is commonly understood to result in isolation – the depressed person retreats from the social world and into a psychic world. A number of the women interviewed in this doctoral project described their experiences of depression and their strategies for coping with its effects. As I discuss in Chapter Five, for some incoming women, their move to Shetland formed part of a strategy for alleviating 'symptoms' of depression. The gendered and spatial character of depression needs further attention. As a researcher, I am well-placed to attend to this, building on this doctoral work to further contribute to geographies of health and well-being in rural and remote areas.

Another area for further research arising from this thesis work is geographies of belonging. In Chapter Five, the mutual constitution of self and place was demonstrated in the relationships people detailed between themselves and Shetland. Although not an explicit focus of the chapter, people did speak to their senses of belonging or not in/to their locale. This manifested in references to feeling known, feeling safe, feeling like an insider or an outsider, and feeling a sense of freedom. The issue of belonging is becoming increasingly important as people move or are (forcibly) moved around the world. The connections between self and place are

genealogical, imaginative, emotional, spatial – they are linked to feelings of rootedness, stability, placelessness, alienation. An investigation of how these links are made and felt, whether in a Shetland context or otherwise, would enable further insight into the spatial patterning of relations and identity in a contemporary western context.

Sociologists such as Lynn Jamieson (1998) and Tony Giddens (1992) have led the way to ensuring more sustained research into practices and experiences of intimacy. As I have demonstrated in Chapter 6, this work can be fruitfully extended with a spatial analysis of people's interpersonal encounters. The tensions that surfaced in my respondents' accounts of intimacy suggest that the configurations of intimacy are shifting in ways that engender anxiety, clashing with closely held ideals of togetherness. Although not elaborated on in this thesis, a variety of intimate relationships were alluded to in interviews and conversations about emotional wellbeing. For example, people talked about the intimacy of love relationships, in mother-daughter relationships and in sibling relationships. Each of these merits further exploration.

On a final note, the development of methodologies for research into emotional geographies has emerged as an area for ongoing study. While professions such as psychotherapy and counselling routinely confront emotional practices, geographers are not (usually) versed in this realm.⁸⁷ During this thesis, I have reflected as to whether social scientists who interview people should be more carefully trained in

⁸⁷ As I mentioned earlier in this thesis, Liz Bondi (e.g. 1999; 2003) is a notable exception.

handling the emotional aspects of research encounters. I am interested in developing an appropriate 'best practice' model for human geographers who engage in relations with others as part of their research. Such a model would draw from explorations in psychotherapeutic and counselling literature and practice, as well as from extensive feminist methodological work

Glossary⁸⁸

Shetland	English
da	the (definite article)
dat	that
fae	from
faider	father
guizer	a person in disguise taking part in a festival, Hallowe'en, Christmas, Hogmanay, Up-Helly-Aa
guizer jarl	the principal guizer in the Up-Helly-Aa festival
göd	good
ken	to know

⁸⁸ Unless otherwise noted, the translations and spellings for Shetland dialect words come from the following two texts: John Graham's *The Shetland Dictionary* and T.A. Robertson and John Graham's *Grammar and Usage of the Shetland Dialect*.

kent	knew (past tense of above verb)
mesel	myself
no	not
noo	now
o	of
onywye	anyway (ony: any; wye: way)
oot	out
peerie	small
sooth	south
sooth-moother	an incomer to Shetland
spaek	to speak
toon	town

wi

by (prep)

wir (wirs)

our (ours)

Appendices

Appendix A: Letter to Potential Interviewees

Deborah Thien
Department of Geography
University of Edinburgh
Drummond Street
Edinburgh EH8 9XP

Dear

I spoke with you over the phone earlier this year to tell you about my upcoming research on women's emotional well-being in Shetland. This letter is to let you know that I am arriving in Shetland this week (from June 6) and will be based in X until August 4, 2002. I hope to meet with you at your convenience sometime during this period. To that end, I will contact you by phone in the next couple of weeks.

Should you wish to contact me, my contact details in Shetland are as follows:

(From June 10 - August 4)

Tel.

I have enclosed a flyer which briefly outlines my research and interview plans. I welcome any questions or feedback you might have.

Sincerely,

Deborah Thien

Appendix B: Research Flyer

(Side 1)

LIVING NORTH, LIVING WELL: Women's strategies for emotional wellbeing in Shetland

Introducing the Research Project

Research Aim: The aim of this project is to collect stories about how women in Shetland manage their emotional well-being. While Shetland is a unique place, the ways women manage their emotional well-being here may be of interest to other northern and island communities in Scotland, and to women in similar communities in places like Canada, New Zealand and Australia. This research will be submitted for a post-graduate degree at the University of Edinburgh.

Interview Themes: I'd like to hear your thoughts on three main themes. The emphasis will be on your stories:

- About experiences of health/wellness/stress/distress
- About ways of maintaining emotional well-being – 'coping'
- About your views on Shetland's unique environment

Research Flyer

(Side 2)

LIVING NORTH, LIVING WELL: Women's strategies for emotional wellbeing in Shetland

What to expect from the Research Interview

Informed consent: You will be asked for your consent to tape record your interview. You will also be asked if the interview material can be used for research purposes. You can request a copy of your interview transcript and you will be sent a summary of the research findings.

Confidentiality: The tapes and transcripts of your interview will be held confidentially by the researcher. You will not be identified in any research publications, unless you request this.

Questions?: If you have any questions or would like to discuss any aspect of this research before participating in the interview, please contact the researcher or supervisor.

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Tel. 0131 650 2532
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Appendix C: Potential Interview Questions (2002)

Stories of health/wellness/stress/distress

Your service deals with/provides for _____ -- and the people you meet in your work are mostly/half/less than half women. How/why do people make contact with you?

What's the most unusual approach you've experienced?

Can you describe a 'typical' approach to your service?

Do women have any difficulties in accessing these services?

Does distance act as a barrier to accessing services?

Are women able to access your services anonymously?

How did you get involved in doing this work? What's your story?

Do you recall the last time you approached a health service in Shetland? What was your experience like? Helpful/unhelpful?

How would you compare your experiences with those of others? (your friends, family, clients, partner/spouse/significant others)

Strategies for maintaining emotional well-being (formal organisations, informal strategies/networks)

Would you describe your service as attending to a sense of emotional health?

What does the idea of emotional wellness mean to the people who use your service?

What does the idea of emotional wellness mean to you?

In your experience, do women have particular needs for emotional health?

In your experience of health services, do they incorporate emotional health in their strategies for wellness?

What other ways do the people who use your service manage their emotional health?

Friends? Family? In Shetland, away from Shetland? Technology (phone, internet, TV)?

Does this reflect your own experience?

Relationships to the environment/place/space of Shetland

Do you describe Shetland as rural and/or remote?

Where are women who use your service coming from? (i.e. Mainland only or other islands)

Does the remote/northern location of Shetland affect your service? i.e. how might the service be different if in a less remote locale?

Do you think this work is different in Shetland/this particular part of Shetland than it would be elsewhere?

How do you manage anonymity?

Do women have particular mental health needs in rural/remote areas? i.e. Shetland?

Does your service offer outreach work? How is this defined?

Additional questions:

Is living up here like the brochure?

Studies have shown that living in geographically isolated areas can be hazardous to your health – has this been your experience? Do you agree/disagree?

If you're feeling in need of some support, would you use physical activity to manage your need? (i.e. walking, exercise, jogging, swimming, dance, cycling etc.)

Do you use the phone, internet, the TV?

Do you use counselling services?

What factors influence the service's ability to meet the needs of the women using your service?

What does it mean to be a woman in a rural/remote area?

Is there much talk these days about services for women? Women's needs? Is this current? Is this the past? Did this ever happen?

Have the needs of the community changed in your experience of the service?

What led to the establishment of your service in this community?

Why is your service in its particular location (i.e. Lerwick)?

Does place make a difference?

Does perception of a place make a difference?

Is there a gender preference for this work? (i.e. more male or female counselors)

Is your workspace primarily women only?

Do you consider Shetland a rural or remote area?

Do you have a process for feedback from women who use your service?

How is the decision-making of the service made? How does this play out with women using the service?

What is your sense of Lerwick/Mainland in relation to the other islands?

Appendix D: Interview Schedule

Introduction

Thanks for agreeing to participate in this research. This research is about the emotional wellbeing of women in Shetland. The research will involve interviews with individuals and groups. I am a postgraduate student and this research will eventually be submitted as a PhD dissertation.

Interview Process

Informed consent: You will be asked for your consent to tape record your interview. I will do this when the tape is on so that you can voice your permission. You will also be asked if the interview material can be used for research purposes. You can request a copy of your interview transcript and you will be sent a summary of the research findings.

Confidentiality: The tapes and transcripts of your interview will be held confidentially by myself. You will not be identified in any research publications, unless you request this.

Personal information: At the end of the interview, if you're willing, I'll go through a short questionnaire to gather some basic details about you that may not have come up in our conversation.

Questions?: If you have any questions or would like to discuss any aspect of this project at any stage, please contact me or supervisor of this project, or ask me any questions as we go along. Do you have any questions to start?

Interview lead-in:

The aim of this project is to determine how women in Shetland manage their emotional well-being. While Shetland is a unique place, the strategies women use here are of interest to other northern and island communities in Scotland, and in other locations like Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

Interview Themes:

- Stories/experiences of health/wellness/stress/distress
- Strategies for maintaining emotional well-being (formal organisations, informal strategies/networks)
- Your sense of Shetland as a living place

Sample Interview Questions:

What does emotional well-being mean to you?

How do you attend to your emotional well-being?

Who do you feel close to? Are they close to you?

Who do you tell your personal/intimate stories to? (Spouse/partner, friend, health professional, an anonymous source, a journal, no-one, the beach...)

Do people around you know your stories, regardless of whether you tell them?

Do you see your needs as the same as/different from those around you?

What happens with secrets? To whom, where and when would you tell these?

Are your secrets safe?

Where might you go to attend to your emotional health?

How is living here like/not like the postcard?

Appendix E: Interview Information Sheet

Date: _____

Name: _____

Contact Details:

Mailing Address

Telephone/fax

Email

Consent (Turn on tape):

Consent to

(1) tape record interview		yes/no
(2) use the interview material for research purposes.	yes/no	

Request for a copy of the interview tape?	yes/no
and/or a summary of the research findings?	yes/no

Request to be named?	yes/no
----------------------	--------

Reminder of Right to Withdraw (as below):	yes/no
---	--------

At any time, you can decide to stop the interview or decline to answer any questions.

Appendix F: Demographic Questionnaire

Women’s Emotional Well-Being in Shetland:
Research Questionnaire

What this information is used for:

The factual information collected in this questionnaire will be used together with your interview for research purposes only. The completed questionnaire will be held confidentially by the researcher. Please answer the following at your discretion:

Year of birth:	Place of birth:	Length of residence in Shetland:
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

How would you describe your relationship status?

Do you have children? NO YES: Number _____ Age(s) _____

How would you describe your sexual orientation?

Do you have a religious affiliation?

Do you have any political affiliations?

What educational qualifications do you hold?

How would you describe your nationality?

How would you describe your race/ethnicity?

PLEASE TURN OVER

Please list the people you consider yourself to be closest to, in order of importance:

<i>i.e.</i>	<i>Relationship</i>	<i>Location</i>
<u>1.</u>	<u>Best Friend</u>	<u>Lerwick</u>
<u>2.</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Edinburgh</u>
<u>3.</u>	<u>Friend</u>	<u>Canada</u>

Relationship	Location

Any additional information you would like to provide:

Appendix G: Affective Maps including User Notes

WOMEN'S EMOTIONAL WELLBEING IN SHETLAND

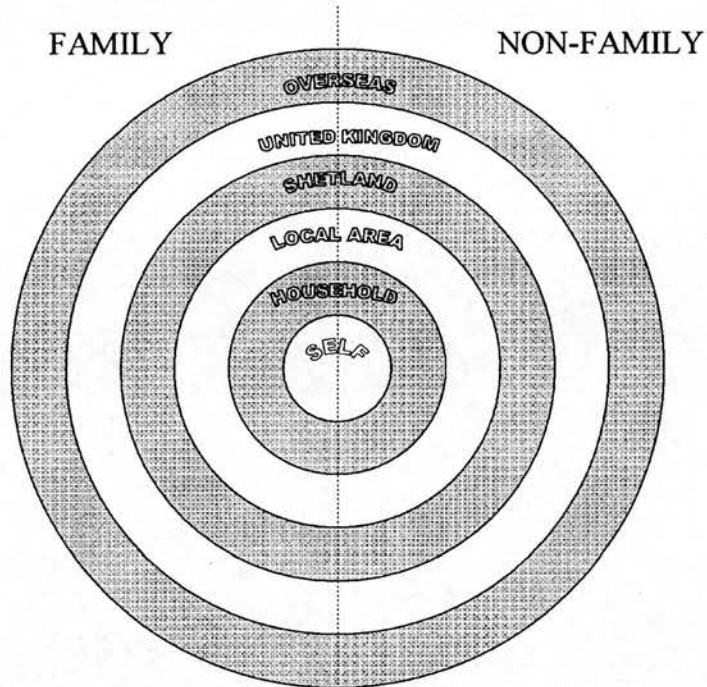
MAPPING YOUR NETWORKS OF EMOTIONAL SUPPORT¹

1. Please identify individuals, groups, and/or organisations that you consider to be part of your network of emotional support.
2. Please place any identified individual/group/organisation on each diagram. Please note, you do not need to identify them by name but please do identify their role (i.e., close friend, immediate family member, support group, counsellor, dance club, drop-in centre, etc.).
3. On the diagram 'Geographic Positions', please indicate the primary mode of communication for each individual/group/organisation identified (key provided on diagram).
4. On the diagram 'Significance of Contact', please colour-code each identified individual/group/organisation identified (key provided on diagram).
5. If you have any comments or questions, please note these on the reverse of these pages.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!

¹ Adapted from S. Wallman (1984)

*NETWORK OF EMOTIONAL SUPPORT:
Geographic Positions*



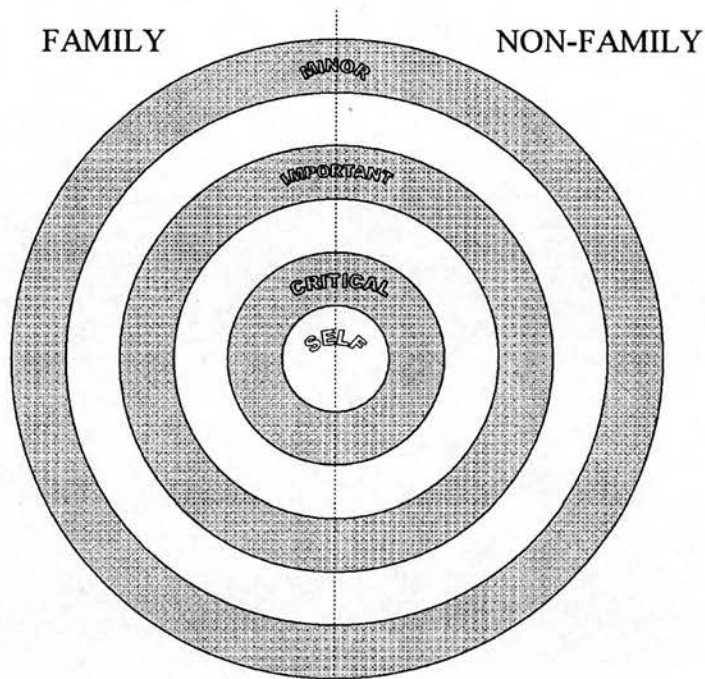
Primary mode of communication:

- P: In person
- T: Telephone
- E: Email/electronic communication
- L: By post
- O: Other (please identify)

PhD Research of Deborah Thien

dthien@geo.ed.ac.uk

*NETWORK OF EMOTIONAL SUPPORT:
Significance of Contact*



Colour Code:

BLUE:	Primarily positive association
RED:	Primarily negative association
YELLOW:	Neither positive nor negative
GREEN:	Both positive and negative

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Appendix H: Interview and Fieldnote codes

Emotional Well-being (RED)

Strategies for EWB: religion, professional help (counselling, psychotherapy), exercise

Metaphors of: Levels and layers of emotional confidences, bounded areas (houses, rooms); touch/closeness (women are 'in touch' with emotion)

Emotion work (being paid to talk about/listen to emotion)

Emotional expression (speaking about emotions, both as a strategy for EWB and as a means of narrating the self); the 'talking bit' (cf. SFI 6 and reference to counselling as the 'talking bit' of EWB); talking therapies; talk show generation

Speaking about emotions: significance of relationality that is based on communication through a potential space vs. a one + state? Input and output (cf. Lacan)

Differences in friendship conversation and therapeutic conversation?

Talking through to normal

Ways of being emotional

Exposing emotions: discomfort, unease, (gendered?) regulation of emotion

Depression

Relationships

Boundaries of self and self-other

Emotions as inherited – an emotional genealogy (SFI 4); an archaeology of abuse (SFI 6)

Shetland (PURPLE)

Shetland Identity

Practical considerations of island living

Travel

Weather

Availability of medical care

Incomer identities and experiences of distance (experiencing Shetland as remote from families and friends down south)

Moving to/from Shetland

Village life/ small community (pros and cons)

Medical care

- Issues of good quality, poor quantity
- Time for care
- Lack of specialized services/knowledge

Lack of life/social choices

Safety (BLACK)

From external dangers

From crime

From people in the south

Efforts to flee internal dangers: doing a geographical in order to escape pain in the psychic landscape

Lack of safety

- Domestic violence
- Threats
- Harassment
- Keeping secrets

Reputation

Gossip

Confidentiality

Anonymity

Friendship/networks

Access to healthcare

Alcohol

Research safety

Gender politics (GREEN)

Shetland attitudes towards women

Women and work (attitudes towards)

Relationship issues (primarily heterosexual)

Mothering

Gendered practices of emotion (SFI 7)

Domestic violence

Discourse of equality: expectations of equal rights and experiences of lack of equal rights

Stories of self (PINK)

Personal story
of illness,
relationship to mental health
depression
moving
travelling away

Others' stories
of illness,
relationship to mental health
depression
moving
travelling away

censuring the self (stories of)

Speaking/living? relationally (ORANGE)
--

Experiences of
Community
Insider/outsider
Social relations/interactions

Relationships
Mothering
Partners
Parents
Local people

Gossip
As information sharing
As social control

Spatial issues (YELLOW)

Physical space (pleasures of, complications of)
Home space (importance of)
Boundaries (maintaining them; monitoring them)
Circles of emotion (layers and level of confidences)
Place reflecting self (contained place, contained people)

Distance as a psychological barrier for health or ill-health (maintains safe distance from and/or prevents need to attend to cause of discomfort; see SFI 5)
Physical/environmental/aesthetic pleasures and experiences: walking, walking by the sea

Psychic landscapes: emotions and psychic isolation: no one to talk to to compare life management; family emotional patterning goes with you wherever your physical being goes

Networks

Expectations of places: i.e. urban, rural

Socio-economic issues/change (TEAL)

Oil stories
Historical references
Alcohol

Mental Health Politics/Issues (BROWN)

Stigma of mental health labels
Difficulty of accessing mental health services
Travel for mental health services
Alcohol

Interview relations (BLUE)

Sceptics of research and or use of it
Enthusiasm for research
Research conundrums
Ethics of research
Personal life
Learning the geography
Position of/as researcher
Being a social being/ethnographer/participant/observer
Ways of entry

Appendix I: Profiles

Aileen

Aileen was born in mainland Scotland and although she returned there to do higher education, she has spent the majority of her life in Shetland. She is in her 40s and married with two school-age children. She is actively involved in her community and in sports.

Andrea

Andrea is a vibrant and warm woman in her mid-late 30s. She is English but has lived in Shetland for almost ten years. Andrea had some very interesting stories to tell about her work and her own experience of living in Shetland. Andrea is employed in support work and belongs to a support group herself as a means to cope with a difficult childhood.

Beth

Beth is a Shetlander in her late 40s who has resided in Shetland all her life, with the exception of some brief periods overseas. She is married to a Shetlander from a different area of Shetland and they have three children. She describes a happy companionable marriage and a good relationship with her children. Her relationship with her own parents is difficult. Beth describes herself as Christian and this is an important part of her life.

Catriona

Catriona is a Scot in her 40s who has resided in Shetland for over a decade. She is married with 3 children. Catriona describes herself as having a socialist leaning. She

has postgraduate training. She is currently employed in counselling work. Catriona has a wide range of interests in science, religion, and education.

Deirdre

When speaking, Deirdre is quite serious, concentrating on what she wants to say; when she pauses, she smiles warmly. Deirdre is Scottish but has a Shetland mother. She suffered from post-natal depression and experiences ongoing depression. She is clear that her Shetland relatives do not understand or support her experience of depression. Deirdre is in her 40s and has a service job.

Felicity

Felicity is in her early 40s and English. She has resided in Shetland for a couple of years and has a long-term association with family in Shetland. Felicity has a number of talents and interests including cooking and used to manage her own food business. She has completed further education and is undertaking ongoing study. Felicity is single.

Helen

Helen is a Shetlander in her early 40s. She has resided in Shetland most of her life and she has owned her own home in Shetland since her mid-30s. Helen describes herself as a single woman in her research questionnaire, but in conversation she has indicated her relationship of some five years with a man in her local community. Helen does not have children. Helen describes herself as holding a belief in Christianity, though she is not a churchgoer. She also describes herself as socialist. Helen has tertiary educational qualifications and works in a professional field.

Jane

Jane grew up in the Scottish countryside and feels she could live quite remotely within Shetland, though she lives centrally in Lerwick currently. Jane has a child who is now in supported living. Previously caring for her adult child had been a full-time occupation for her. Jane is in her 60s and has professional qualifications.

Jenny

Jenny is outgoing and enthusiastic. She has lived a short time in Shetland's Northern Isles and is originally from mainland Scotland. She lives with her husband and children. Jenny and I had our interview in her busy kitchen. We talked (and the taped whirred) while we peeled potatoes and made other meal preparations.

Joan

Joan is a Shetlander who has spent her life in Shetland. She is married to a Shetland man and they have grown-up children. Joan is active in various community and support work within Shetland. She is a warm-hearted woman. At the time of our interview, Joan had been recently bereaved by a death in the family.

Joanne

Joanne is English and in her late 30s. She has lived in Shetland much of her adult life. She was previously married to a Shetlander, but is now on her own with their three children. Most of her friends are married and busy with children and she finds her social life somewhat limited. Joanne is gregarious and laughs readily. She is educated to a postgraduate level and is now in business for herself.

Judy

Judy was born in Shetland and has spent most of her life there. She completed Highers and vocational qualifications in Scotland, but returned to Shetland and

'married into a family'. She describes herself as full Shetland as both her mother and her father's people are Shetlanders. She married young and divorced quite soon after her second child was born. She now lives with a long-term partner. Judy is vivacious and energetic and seems younger than the early 40s that she is. Judy is employed in a voluntary organization.

Julia

Julia is English and moved to Shetland's Northern Isles within the past few years. She is enthusiastic about her life in Shetland and expects to remain there. She has grown-up children in the south and is currently single. She also has grandchildren in the south.

Linda

Linda is a Shetlander in her 40s and has been a lifelong resident of Shetland, although she has moved locations within Shetland. Linda is both direct and very welcoming. Linda is very proud of her Shetland culture. She is employed in counselling work. Linda and her children left an abusive partner at a young age. She is now remarried and a grandmother.

Liz

Liz is English and has lived in Shetland for a couple of years. She lives with her long-term partner and their four children. They relocated to Shetland for a work opportunity that arose for her husband and she is now also employed in a professional capacity.

Lynn

Lynn is from mainland Scotland but has lived in Shetland for almost twenty years. Lynn is a neat, spare Scottish woman, as economical in her manner of expression as

in her appearance, with the exception of an evident delight in vibrantly coloured clothes. Lynn is highly active in a variety of sports pursuits.

Margaret

Margaret is English and has been in Shetland for a couple of years. She is very aware of her incomer status. She describes how her Shetland friends shop from a catalogue instead of buying in Lerwick, and a friend's husband made it clear that he thought his wife had picked up this habit from Margaret. She sees this as an example of how she is understood as an outsider and is seen as bringing in outsider's ways. She is well-dressed in trendy clothes. Margaret is married with small children and described herself, tongue-in-cheek, as 'heterosexual, for now!'. She is employed in a mental health profession.

Marie

Marie is in her late 40s and English. She has lived in Shetland much of her adult life. Previously married, she has two children and lives with a long-term partner. Marie is educated to the postgraduate level. Marie describes herself as very committed to her community development work and she is passionate about her various interests.

Mary

Mary is Scottish but is a long-term resident of Shetland and married to a Shetlander. Mary did not complete a demographic questionnaire but is approximately 60 years of age. She is employed in counselling work.

Nancy

Nancy is in her 50s and a lovely warm woman. She is originally from Scotland and describes herself as Scottish, but has been in Shetland most of her adult life. She is married to a Shetlander from the outer isles. Despite her long-term residence in

Shetland, Nancy was careful to qualify her impressions of Shetland with the frequent reminder that she wasn't Shetland-born. Nancy has completed higher education and has a professional career which involves counselling work.

Pauline

Pauline is a Scottish woman who has lived in Shetland most of her adult life. She feels that life has been better in Shetland than it would have been in mainland Scotland. She describes the warmth and openness of Shetland. She identifies as a city-dweller and so the Shetland outdoors is not something she thinks much about.

Susan

Susan moved up to the Northern Isles about two years ago from England with her partner and children. She describes this move as "a lifestyle change" and then notes that is the "understatement of the year." She is employed in healthcare.

Ursula

Ursula is a Shetlander and a healthcare professional. She is in her 30s and lives with a long-term partner and young children. Ursula is friendly with a direct manner.

Appendix J: Table of Participant Data

Name	Age	Place of Birth	Residence in Shetland (years)	Relationship Status	Children	Religious Affiliation	Political Affiliation	Education
Aileen	40+	Scotland	30+	Married	yes	Christian	no	Higher Education
Beth	40+	Shetland	lifelong	Married	yes	Christian	no	Further Education
Catriona	40+	Scotland	10+	Married	yes	Christian	socialist	Higher Education
Felicity	40+	England	3-	Single	no	Christian	no	Further Education
Helen	40+	Shetland	30+	Single	no	Christian	socialist	Higher Education
Jane	60+	Scotland	30+	Widow	yes	no	no	Further Education
Joan	60+	Shetland	lifelong	Married	yes	Christian	no	Further Education
Joanne	30+	England	10+	Single	yes	no	no	Higher Education
Judy	40+	Shetland	30+	Long-term Partner	yes	Christian	Labour	Secondary Education
Linda	40+	Shetland	lifelong	Married	yes	no	no	Further Education
Liz	40+	England	3-	Long-term Partner	yes	Atheist	Labour	Higher Education
Lynn	40+	Scotland	15+	Long-term Partner	no	no	no	Further Education
Margaret	40+	England	3-	Married	yes	no	no	Further Education
Marie	40+	England	15+	Long-term Partner	yes	no	no	Higher Education
Nancy	50+	Scotland	20+	Married	yes	no	no	Higher Education
Ursula	30+	Shetland	30+	Long-term Partner	yes	no	no	Higher Education

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